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January 15, 2025

Confirmation Hearing of Homeland Security

Secretary Nominee Gov. Kristi Noem

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<p>1 SENATOR PAUL: ... that the department 2 and its components engage in. In other words, we 3 do so much stuff and we're so big we can't 4 describe it for you. But if we can't describe 5 what we have, we got a problem. In plain 6 language, the DHS had really no idea. Think 7 about it. An agency commanding over \$110 billion 8 annually can't account for its own activities. 9 This is not just bureaucratic incompetence, it's 10 emblematic of a deeper issue, an agency unsure of 11 its own boundaries and commitments. How can an 12 agency fulfill its mission or earn the American 13 people's trust if it doesn't even know the extent 14 of its own operations? 15 But the problems don't stop there. 16 Instead of focusing on critical threats like 17 securing the southwest border, DHS has shifted 18 its gaze inward, targeting law-abiding Americans. 19 DHS, under the Biden administration, has often 20 used its vast powers to target Americans 21 exercising their constitutional rights. It's 22 become an agency more focused on policing speech, 23 monitoring social media, and labeling political 24 dissent as "domestic terrorism" than addressing 25 genuine security threats. While cartels traffic</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 2</p>	<p>1 liberty hand in hand, not at odds with each 2 other. 3 Today we gather to consider the 4 nomination of Governor Kristi Noem to serve as 5 the Secretary of Department of Homeland Security. 6 I hope this hearing will set the tone for this 7 committee's work in the new Congress to restore 8 transparency and accountability to an executive 9 branch that has grown unchecked. Governor Noem, 10 if confirmed, you will lead an agency that has 11 lost its way. Your record as governor of South 12 Dakota and a former member of Congress 13 demonstrates your willingness to make difficult 14 decisions in the face of significant political 15 pressure, and to put the interest of American 16 people first. You have the opportunity today to 17 address how your background and vision will 18 translate to leading one of the most critical and 19 scrutinized departments in the federal 20 government. 21 This is the first of many consequential 22 moments for this committee as we renew our 23 commitment to the constitutional oversight role 24 that Congress must assert. I have no doubt that 25 the nominee we'll consider in the coming weeks</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 4</p>
<p>1 people and fentanyl across an unguarded border, 2 DHS has spent its time and resources creating 3 partisan disinformation boards, spying on 4 Americans through invasive surveillance 5 technologies. The mission drift is dangerous. 6 Every dollar spent monitoring law-abiding 7 citizens is a dollar not spent securing the 8 homeland. Every moment spent targeting political 9 opponents is a moment not addressing real threats 10 like border security, cyber-attacks, or the 11 rising influence of adversarial nation states. 12 The priorities of DHS have been deeply distorted, 13 and the American people are paying the price. 14 And what about DHS's response to COVID- 15 19, arguably one of the greatest threats to 16 homeland security? The answer is clear: 17 nothing. They knew nothing of the origins, they 18 didn't study the issue, and they had no 19 information about gain-of-function research. 20 We've seen firsthand how unchecked government 21 overreach leads to waste, fraud, and abuse. We 22 cannot let DHS become yet another agency that 23 operates behind a veil of secrecy. The American 24 people deserve transparency, accountability, and 25 leadership that puts national security and</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 3</p>	<p>1 and months that you will be up for the challenge. 2 Governor Noem, thank you for your willingness to 3 serve, and I yield to the Ranking Member for his 4 opening remarks. 5 SENATOR PETERS: Thank you, Chairman 6 Paul. Governor Noem, it's great to see you here 7 today, and I want to first thank you for making 8 yourself available not only to the entire 9 committee, but to the discussions that we had in 10 my office. Going perhaps a little more in-depth 11 on the issues than is possible in a hearing like 12 this and having that open and frank conversation 13 is something that I appreciate. Also appreciate 14 your willingness to spend time with committee 15 staff as we conduct our due diligence and review 16 of your qualifications and the background to 17 serve as secretary of the Department of Homeland 18 Security. 19 As our third-largest federal agency, 20 with more than 240,000 employees and an operating 21 budget of more than \$100 billion, the Department 22 of Homeland Security requires strong, stable, and 23 principled leadership. Our nation faces serious 24 threats and security challenges, from securing 25 our borders and combating terrorism to preventing</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 5</p>

<p>1 cyber-attacks and responding to our nation's 2 increasing number of natural disasters, and DHS 3 is the first line of defense in all of those 4 areas. I appreciated the conversations we had at 5 today's hearing, where we discussed the 6 importance of ensuring that our nation's borders 7 are safe and secure. And while we must address 8 the significant challenges we face on the 9 southern border, we also need to ensure that 10 there are sufficient resources to secure our 11 northern border, something I know you're very 12 familiar with as the governor of your state, 13 including building out our Northern Border 14 Mission Center.</p> <p>15 This is especially important in my home 16 state of Michigan, which has two of the nation's 17 busiest border crossings, and we're going to be 18 adding another span shortly, the Gordie Howe 19 International Bridge, which will open later this 20 year. To facilitate the lawful trade and travel 21 out those ports of entry that are absolutely 22 critical to our economy, I've worked on 23 legislation to hire additional U.S. Customs and 24 Border Protection officers to meet increased 25 staffing demands. We must secure our borders,</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 6</p>	<p>1 companies. There's no question that DHS must 2 continue to lead the way in protecting our 3 networks from foreign adversaries, cyber 4 criminals, and so-called "hacktivists" to prevent 5 cyber-attacks from becoming increasingly 6 devastating to our security as well as to our 7 economy.</p> <p>8 And finally, the Department of Federal 9 Emergency Management Agency must continue to work 10 hard to address the increasing number of natural 11 disasters affecting our communities as a result 12 of climate change. From violent storms like 13 hurricanes that brought destruction to states 14 across the South, to the devastating wildfires in 15 California, and countless other severe storms and 16 flooding events all across our country, we need 17 leadership at the department that will ensure our 18 nation effectively responds to communities when 19 disaster strikes them.</p> <p>20 The safety and security of our nation 21 and the American people depend on the 22 department's ability to effectively address these 23 wide-ranging threats. So, Governor Noem, thank 24 you again for your willingness to serve in this 25 incredibly important position, and thank you for</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 8</p>
<p>1 but we also know it is well time passed to 2 streamline our immigration and our asylum process 3 as well.</p> <p>4 In addition to border security, DHS is 5 responsible for addressing many threats that face 6 our nation. Just a few weeks ago, unfortunately, 7 Americans were shocked to see two horrific 8 incidents in New Orleans and Las Vegas, a deadly 9 reminder that terrorism and radicalization remain 10 very real and ongoing threats to our homeland. 11 In my role on this committee, I've made combating 12 foreign and domestic terrorism, as well as 13 extremism, a top priority. In this complex 14 environment, it is essential that DHS continue to 15 focus on all terrorism threats, track, and report 16 data to Congress and to the American people, and 17 coordinate between all components to ensure the 18 department is effectively addressing all types of 19 terrorist threats.</p> <p>20 We've also seen that persistent cyber- 21 attacks are still a very serious threat. In 22 fact, an increasing threat. A recent attack from 23 Chinese-based hackers infiltrated the Treasury 24 Department, on top of ongoing Salt Typhoon hack 25 that comprised numerous U.S. telecommunications</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 7</p>	<p>1 being here today. I look forward to having a 2 comprehensive discussion about how you intend to 3 lead this critical department through a series of 4 national security challenges, if indeed you are 5 confirmed.</p> <p>6 SENATOR PAUL: This morning, Governor 7 Noem will be introduced by Majority Leader John 8 Thune and Senator Kevin Cramer. Senator Thune, 9 you're recognized.</p> <p>10 SENATOR THUNE: Thank you, Mr. 11 Chairman, and Ranking Member Peters, and members 12 of the committee. I'm very pleased to be able to 13 be here today to introduce South Dakota's 14 outstanding governor who has been nominated by 15 President Trump to serve as the Secretary of the 16 Department of Homeland Security. I've known 17 Kristi Noem for a long time. She has a very 18 compelling personal and family story, which 19 inspired her entrance into the public arena, and 20 I'm sure you'll hear a little bit more about that 21 from her. But I've observed as she has gone 22 through the state legislature as a leader there, 23 state House of Representatives, the U.S. House of 24 Representatives, where she was our only member 25 from South Dakota representing our state's</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 9</p>

<p>1 interests there for eight years, and now 2 currently as South Dakota's governor, and I think 3 she brings to this job a number of things that 4 are going to be really essential. 5 And one is obviously a skill set when 6 it comes to managing hard problems. She led our 7 state through the pandemic, managed what were 8 extraordinary circumstances all across this 9 country in a way that made South Dakota, frankly, 10 a magnet for people from other states who were 11 trying to flee or get away from some of the 12 heavy-handed requirements that were imposed in 13 other states around the country. Our state 14 stayed open, stayed free, and that was largely 15 due to her leadership. 16 And I would say too, as we tackle what 17 is an enormously complicated and hard issue, 18 which is our southern border, it's going to 19 require a skill set which I believe she 20 possesses, it's going to require a tremendous 21 amount of persistence and determination, which I 22 think she has, an enormous amount of energy, 23 which she has in abundance. And frankly, what I 24 would say is just absolute toughness. It's going 25 to take some tough and hard leadership to get</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 10</p>	<p>1 of the Department of Homeland Security. Thank 2 you, Mr. Chairman. 3 SENATOR PAUL: Senator Cramer? 4 SENATOR CRAMER: Thank you, Chairman 5 Paul, Ranking Member Peters, colleagues. Once 6 again, I find myself in full agreement with the 7 majority leader. It's a good place to be in our 8 business. 9 So, this is a very special opportunity 10 for me, and first thing I want to do is thank 11 nearly all of you. I got into almost every one 12 of your offices with Kristi as her very 13 amateurish sitting Senator Sherpa. And the 14 blessing for me was not only to be with my good 15 friend and former colleague, but to learn a lot 16 about this committee that I'm not on and to get 17 an inside view. And Gary, especially learning 18 how we can work together at the northern border 19 and how similar, although very different, 20 Michigan and North Dakota are. So, thank you for 21 your hospitality, you were all very kind to 22 Kristi and to me. 23 But Kristi is a former colleague. When 24 you're the only member of a body of 435 from an 25 entire state, it's really important to have</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 12</p>
<p>1 things back in order. 2 And I want to refer to something she 3 said in her state of the state address earlier 4 this week to South Dakotans, and that is that 5 "Over the past four years, we've seen a complete 6 disregard for the security of our borders and the 7 safety of the American people, to say nothing for 8 the rule of law. Chaos at our southern border 9 and the Biden administration has left our country 10 vulnerable to a whole host of security concerns, 11 from terrorist entries to cross-border criminal 12 activity like drug trafficking." I think it's 13 well documented, and I think it's high time that 14 it gets fixed, and we have somebody nominated by 15 the President that I believe has the 16 capabilities, the qualities, the experience, and 17 again, frankly, the determination and toughness 18 to solve what is a very, very tough issue, and 19 one which is desperately in need of solutions. 20 So, I'm pleased to be able to be here 21 today to introduce our great governor and to 22 thank you for your consideration. I look forward 23 to this committee acting on her nomination, and I 24 look forward to voting for her on the floor of 25 the United States Senate to be the next Secretary</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 11</p>	<p>1 friends. So, together, Kristi and I were two, 2 two out of 435, and if we could get Montana, 3 Wyoming, and Alaska, there'd be five of us that 4 could take on the fight. But I know this. I 5 remember our very first year, my first year, it 6 was not hers, my first year in the House, the 7 unthinkable happened, and the House of 8 Representatives failed to pass a farm bill. And 9 all I can tell you was the least secure homeland 10 person in America was the Speaker of the House 11 and the Majority Leader the next day, when Kristi 12 and I doubled up, and eventually we got a farm 13 bill done. 14 I say that because we are living at a 15 time, and Senator Peters, you used the words 16 "strong, stable, and principled". I can't think 17 of three better words to describe Kristi Noem 18 than those three words. I would add this. I'm 19 not surprised that President Trump turned to 20 Governor Noem. Securing the homeland is the 21 number one priority, our number one priority, our 22 number one constitutional priority, as a 23 Congress. And it is for sure the number one 24 priority of the voters in the last election. And 25 it is the number one priority for President</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 13</p>

<p>1 Donald Trump. So, naturally he would say, "Hmm, 2 who is the toughest, smartest, most capable 3 protector that I know? I think I'd like to find 4 a ranch woman, mom, grandmother, who knows how to 5 protect her own." And when you grow up on a 6 ranch in the prairies or the West, nobody else is 7 going to look out for your critters. No one else 8 is protecting your family. You do it. 9 And she brings this skill set, as 10 Senator Thune said, as a leader, as a legislator, 11 as a member of Congress, as a governor, a very 12 important... By the way, when I get into the room 13 with other governors, Senator Hassan, I might as 14 well have just left, because I was not part of a 15 club where I don't belong. But anyway, it was 16 very, very rich, because there's an alliance 17 there that's really, really important. And so, 18 for me, it's just a really special opportunity to 19 be able to be here with her and to have had this 20 time in your offices introducing her to you. 21 But I want to wrap up with this, 22 because last night I received a very touching 23 letter, unsolicited by either Kristi or me, from 24 the tribal chairwoman from the Standing Rock 25 Sioux Tribe, which straddles North Dakota and</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 14</p>	<p>1 to support her and turn it over to her. 2 SENATOR PAUL: Thank you for those 3 great introductions. The committee has also 4 received several statements in support of 5 Governor Noem's nomination, including a letter 6 from 22 fellow governors, the International 7 Association of Firefighters, and six other 8 organizations. Without objection, these letters 9 of support will be made part of the hearing 10 record. And I know our Senators are going to 11 have to go but thank you for coming and doing 12 those introductions. 13 It's the practice of this committee to 14 swear in the witnesses. Governor Noem, please 15 stand and raise your right hand. Do you swear 16 that the testimony you will give before this 17 committee will be the truth, the whole truth, and 18 nothing but the truth, so help you God? 19 GOVERNOR NOEM: I will. 20 SENATOR PAUL: Governor Noem, you are 21 now recognized for your opening statement. 22 GOVERNOR NOEM: Thank you, and good 23 morning, Chairman Paul, Ranking Member Peters, 24 and the distinguished members of this committee. 25 I'm honored to appear before all of you today as</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 16</p>
<p>1 South Dakota. They don't really care who wins 2 the South Dakota State/North Dakota State 3 football game, but they do care about their 4 reservation. And Chairwoman Alkire sent me this 5 letter. Standing Rock is the home of Sitting 6 Bull in case you were wondering about the 7 credentials of their ability to protect the 8 homeland. 9 I'll just read a few words. "On 10 multiple occasions, Governor Noem has invited the 11 Standing Rock Sioux Tribe to her table at the 12 South Dakota State Capitol to enter into 13 meaningful discussions." That's what I witnessed 14 when she came to your offices. And Janet writes, 15 "It is of great excitement and enthusiasm that 16 our North Dakota Governor Doug Burgum will be at 17 the helm of the Department of Interior, and my 18 hopes remain high that you will feel the same 19 about Governor Kristi Noem at the helm of the 20 Department of Homeland Security. These two 21 governors understand the needs in Indian country, 22 and what words like tribal sovereignty, 23 jurisdiction, and consultation mean to the 24 Indigenous people." Speaks volumes to her 25 leadership and to her character. It's my honor</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 15</p>	<p>1 the nominee for the Secretary of Homeland 2 Security. I want to thank President-elect Donald 3 J. Trump for his confidence in my leadership, and 4 the people of South Dakota for their fantastic 5 support throughout my time in public service. I 6 would also like to express my sincere gratitude 7 to Senator Cramer. He has been an invaluable 8 resource to me throughout this process, and given 9 me much wisdom, as well as insight, into the 10 thoughts and the procedures of the Senate and 11 this body. And I'd also like to express my 12 gratitude to Senator Thune, the Majority Leader 13 of this esteemed body. He's been an advisor to 14 me for many years, as well as a friend, and I'm 15 so grateful for the generous support of these two 16 men and their willingness to be here this morning 17 to speak on my behalf, and to introduce me to 18 this committee. 19 Now, I'm a wife and a mother and a 20 grandmother; a farmer, rancher, businessperson. 21 I've served in our state legislature, in Congress 22 for eight years, and also a governor. I've spent 23 my entire life in rural America. I understand 24 what it means to work hard every single day, and 25 to build a better future for your kids and for</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 17</p>

<p>1 all of our communities. I come before you today 2 with a deep sense of responsibility and a 3 humility, as the nominee, to lead the Department 4 of Homeland Security, and also a commitment to 5 the more than 330 Americans who we will work 6 together to help serve and to keep safe and 7 secure in their homes and in their communities. 8 Now, before I proceed, I want to 9 introduce to you my husband, Bryon, who's here 10 with me today. He is my constant 24/7 reminder 11 of our dedication to public service, and that 12 it's not a solo effort or done alone. He has 13 been a rock by my side, and I appreciate all of 14 his love over so many years. I'm grateful that 15 he's here with me today. 16 Now, securing our homeland is a 17 serious, sacred trust that must be relentlessly 18 pursued, and can never be taken for granted. 19 Being safe within our borders here in America is 20 critical, and yet Americans feel less safe than 21 they have felt in decades. For the first time in 22 30 years, more than 40 percent of Americans are 23 afraid to walk alone at night within a mile of 24 their homes. President-elect Trump is going to 25 change that. I've seen firsthand the challenges</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 18</p>	<p>1 leading the Department of Homeland Security. 2 As we face the evolving threats of the 3 21st century, the mission and the success of DHS 4 is more critical than ever. We must be vigilant 5 and proactive and innovative to protect the 6 homeland. The challenges in front of us are 7 extremely significant, and we must secure our 8 borders against illegal trafficking and 9 immigration. We must safeguard our critical 10 infrastructure to make sure that we're protected 11 against cyber-attacks, respond to natural 12 disasters, and also terrorism. I firmly believe 13 that we can meet those challenges head on with 14 resolve. Innovation, we can use collaboration 15 with federal and with state partners. And 16 Senators, I want your input. Border security 17 must remain a top priority. As a nation, we have 18 the right and the responsibility to secure our 19 borders against those who would do us harm, and 20 we must create a fair and a lawful immigration 21 system that is efficient, and is effective, and 22 that reflects our values. 23 President Trump was elected with a 24 clear mandate. He needs to achieve this mission, 25 because two-thirds of Americans support his</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 20</p>
<p>1 and the opportunities facing our great nation. 2 In the 20 years since the Department of Homeland 3 Security was formed, the nature of the threats to 4 our homeland has grown and they've evolved. This 5 department was created in response to the 6 failures of the government that led to the 7 September 11th 2001 terrorist attacks, and that 8 reality is not lost on me, especially in the wake 9 of the recent terrorist attacks over New Year's. 10 Now, I've led South Dakota for the last 11 six years, with a focus every day on making our 12 state safer, stronger, and freer. I've focused 13 every day on making the best decisions, not just 14 for right now, but for generations to come. I've 15 overseen a state budget of over \$7 billion, and a 16 state employee workforce of more than 13,000, 17 including more than 7,000 that report directly to 18 the governor. I've addressed important issues 19 like cyber security, human trafficking, drug 20 interdiction, and also natural disasters, the 21 same challenges that are facing so many of you 22 and the people that you represent back home. 23 I've secured our state and supported the rule of 24 law, and if confirmed as the eighth secretary, 25 that is the same approach that I will take to</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 19</p>	<p>1 immigration and border policies, including the 2 majority of Hispanic Americans. I was the first 3 governor to send National Guard troops to our 4 southern border when Texas asked for help and 5 when they were being overwhelmed by an 6 unprecedented border crisis. If confirmed as 7 secretary, I'll ensure that our exceptional, 8 extraordinary Border Patrol agents have all the 9 tools and resources and support that they need to 10 carry out their mission effectively. The same is 11 true of my commitment to the outstanding men and 12 women of the U.S. Immigration and Customs 13 Enforcement. They are responsible for 14 apprehending, detaining, and deporting illegal 15 immigrants, and getting criminal aliens off of 16 our streets and out of the country will help 17 American communities be safer again. The bravery 18 and the dedication of the Border Patrol and ICE 19 are unmatched, and I will restore dignity to 20 their work. The rising threat of cyberattacks 21 also demands our utmost attention, and our 22 critical infrastructure, from energy grids to 23 financial institutions, is under constant attack 24 by foreign adversaries and criminal actors. As 25 secretary, I will prioritize a comprehensive,</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 21</p>

<p>1 whole-of-government approach to cybersecurity. 2 In fact, in the coming days, we have to plan 3 bigger and think faster and smarter. I fully 4 acknowledge that people in Washington D.C. do not 5 have all of the answers, and therefore, I will 6 leverage private-public partnerships, I'll 7 advance cutting-edge, state-of-the-art 8 technologies to protect our nation's digital 9 landscape, and I will have a proven track record 10 of doing this in South Dakota to back me up. 11 I've helped make Dakota State University a global 12 leader in cybersecurity education, because we 13 recognize the need to address this emerging 14 threat. And I will take a proactive approach if 15 given the opportunity to serve as secretary. 16 Now, President-elect Trump has been a tremendous 17 friend to law enforcement over the years, and I 18 will do the same in my role as secretary. As 19 governor, I've worked closely with law 20 enforcement to make South Dakota safer. I've 21 overseen hundreds of state troopers in the South 22 Dakota Highway Patrol, and on several occasions, 23 I've convened groups of law enforcement from 24 across our state to address policies that will 25 make our people safer. In fact, while some in</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 22</p>	<p>1 homeland security isn't just about prevention, 2 but it's also about resilience. When disasters 3 strike, as we know they will, the Department of 4 Homeland Security must be ready to respond 5 swiftly, efficiently, and effectively to protect 6 the lives and the property of Americans. As 7 governor, I've worked with FEMA in response to a 8 dozen natural disasters in South Dakota. These 9 have included historic floods, tornadoes, 10 blizzards, wildfires, a derecho, and even a 11 global pandemic. As secretary, I will enhance 12 our emergency preparedness and strengthen FEMA's 13 capabilities, and we will ensure that no 14 community is left behind, and that life-saving 15 services, like electricity and water, are quickly 16 restored. 17 As secretary, I will oversee the Secret 18 Service, an agency that is in serious need of 19 reforms. We all saw the threats to President- 20 elect Trump last year and the consequences of 21 failure. Now, that should never happen again, 22 and I've worked closely with my own gubernatorial 23 protective detail, and I'm familiar with what 24 works and what doesn't work, and I'll bring that 25 experience towards strengthening the Secret</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 24</p>
<p>1 this country were attacking law enforcement and 2 defunding them, we took the opposite approach in 3 South Dakota. We recruited law enforcement 4 officers to move to South Dakota, a state that 5 respects their service and their sacrifice, and 6 we revamped our law enforcement training to 7 provide the first ever state-led tribal-focused 8 law enforcement training academy. I'm very proud 9 of the work that we've done in cooperation with 10 our tribes to help make their communities more 11 safe. 12 And we must remain vigilant against 13 terrorism and against others who wish to do us 14 harm to our country and to our great people. 15 I'll ensure that our intelligence and our law 16 enforcement agencies are working together hand- 17 in-hand, that they're fully equipped to detect, 18 prevent, and respond to threats from radical 19 ideologies and foreign adversaries. This 20 requires resources, coordination, and 21 collaboration across all levels of government. 22 And once again, I will seek your wisdom, and I 23 will seek your input into the months ahead. For 24 the sake of the people that we both represent, we 25 have to get this right. Now, I recognize that</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 23</p>	<p>1 Service once again. 2 I'm committed to working with this 3 committee, with Congress, and with the dedicated 4 men and women of the Department of Homeland 5 Security to fulfill our mission. And together, 6 we can ensure that the United States remains a 7 beacon of freedom, safety, and security for 8 generations to come. So, thank you for the 9 opportunity and the honor to appear before you 10 today. Thank you for the meetings and the time 11 that you took in your office to discuss the 12 department and what we can do in the future to 13 make the American homeland much more secure. I 14 look forward to your questions, and I hope to 15 earn your trust, and hopefully also your vote, as 16 we embark on this critical work together. With 17 that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back. 18 SENATOR PAUL: Thank you, Governor 19 Noem. We will now proceed to questions. Each 20 member will have seven minutes. We will have a 21 vote that will start at 10:00 a.m., but we're 22 going to continue the hearing and keep people in 23 line; as you come and go to vote, we'll keep the 24 hearing moving. I want to be clear from the 25 outset that we will not tolerate any disruptions.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 25</p>

<p>1 The Capitol Police have been asked to escort 2 anyone immediately from the room if they disrupt 3 the hearing. 4 This is a standard question, Governor 5 Noem, that we ask of all nominees. Governor 6 Noem, do you agree without reservation to comply 7 with any request or summons to appear and testify 8 before any duly constituted Committee of Congress 9 if you are confirmed? 10 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yes, Mr. Chairman, 11 SENATOR PAUL: I'm going to reserve the 12 rest of my time for my questions and go to 13 Senator Peters. 14 SENATOR PETERS: Thank you, Mr. 15 Chairman. Governor Noem, the DHS Secretary, has 16 many competing priorities, as you well know, and 17 you outlined, certainly, in your opening 18 comments, from our borders to wildfires to cyber- 19 attacks. But as you and I discussed at length, 20 and I appreciate you bringing it up in your 21 opening comments as well, we do have a northern 22 border in addition to a southern border, that's 23 absolutely essential that the DHS has the 24 resources necessary at the northern border to 25 carry out its mission, both between ports of</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 26</p>	<p>1 addressing all threats that may come in from any 2 direction. And also, with the bridge as well and 3 staffing up on that, that as well, and I've 4 assured Senator Slotkin as well that our focus is 5 there to make sure that it is staffed 6 appropriately. 7 SENATOR PETERS: Very good. And as we 8 discussed, the department is diligently working 9 to stand up the Northern Border Mission Center at 10 Selfridge Air National Guard Base in Michigan, 11 following the authorization and funding that I 12 was able to secure in the last Congress. This 13 center is critical to supporting the Department's 14 northern border security missions and addressing 15 evolving threats. So, quick question: if 16 confirmed, do you commit to working with me to 17 fully build out the Northern Border Mission 18 Center? 19 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yes, Senator, we will 20 look forward, and I look forward, to working with 21 you to ensure that that is a priority, and that 22 it's adequately resourced, and working with 23 Congress and Senators to make sure that we have 24 what we need to make sure that that mission for 25 that base is fully fulfilled.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 28</p>
<p>1 entry and all along the border. In fact, we've 2 seen an increase in unauthorized crossings in 3 recent years at the northern border. 4 So, my question for you is, if 5 confirmed, do you commit to ensuring, along with 6 the southern border, that the northern border is 7 sufficiently staffed to maintain its security and 8 robust trade between the U.S. and its neighbors, 9 including at the Gordie Howe International Bridge 10 in my home state of Michigan, have the resources 11 they need to facilitate trade, while keeping 12 Americans safe? 13 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yes, Senator Peters, 14 you and I talked about this in your office, and 15 also with Senator Slotkin as well, how important 16 it is to continue to remain focused on our 17 northern border, and all borders and ports of 18 entry that the United States has. I think 19 there's been some universal concern from some of 20 the committee members that as we focus on the 21 southern border and what we're seeing, as far as 22 the invasion there and the amount of people 23 crossing, that the northern border would lose 24 focus. But that will not happen, and we will 25 ensure that our borders are secure, and we're</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 27</p>	<p>1 SENATOR PETERS: Great. Thank you. On 2 New Year's, we witnessed two incidents that 3 reminded us that terrorism and extremism remain 4 serious threats to all Americans. Both DHS and 5 the FBI have consistently said that the most 6 persistent threat to the homeland is from U.S.- 7 based individuals or small groups radicalized by 8 a variety of ideologies, from white supremacy to 9 ISIS to al-Qaeda. We must certainly continue to 10 focus on people who are radicalized here in the 11 United States with the intent of terrorizing our 12 communities. So, my question for you, ma'am, is 13 how do you plan to address this threat of U.S.- 14 based terrorists? 15 GOVERNOR NOEM: Senator, this is a 16 grave concern for our country, as we all agree 17 that the number one threat to our homeland 18 security is the southern border. In fact, since 19 Joe Biden has been president, we've seen 382 20 individuals that have come over that border that 21 are on the terrorist watch list. I, behind me, 22 have the governor of Louisiana with me, and he 23 and his state and people in this country went 24 through a horrific event on New Year's Day, and 25 one that we never want to see repeated again.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 29</p>

<p>1 But this governor behind me is concerned also 2 about an upcoming event, which is the Super Bowl, 3 coming shortly, which we need to do all that we 4 can to work together, that he has the reassurance 5 that the federal government, that the Department 6 of Homeland Security, is prepared to help him 7 protect that event, and to keep people safe while 8 they are there. 9 Those 382 terrorists are known 10 terrorists that have come over our border. We 11 don't know necessarily where they are because of 12 what has been happening under Joe Biden's 13 policies. Now, President Trump obviously won the 14 last election with a clear mandate, and that 15 mandate is for the American people to secure that 16 border. But also, we need to focus on domestic 17 terrorism and homegrown terrorism, which you just 18 referenced in your question. Homegrown 19 GOVERNOR NOEM: Homegrown terrorism is 20 on the rise. We see more and more incidents of 21 people that are U.S. citizens that have become 22 radicalized. And knowing when people are leaving 23 the country and coming back and changes to their 24 behaviors and what their actions are is 25 critically important.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 30</p>	<p>1 infiltrated the Department of Treasury and stole 2 potentially thousands of unclassified documents. 3 So, given these concerning trends by the PRC to 4 hold our federal networks' hostage, do you 5 believe that federal agencies should be required 6 to implement cybersecurity upgrades and maintain 7 the highest cybersecurity standards to protect 8 sensitive or classified data and U.S. citizen 9 information as well? 10 GOVERNOR NOEM: Well, Senator, the 11 mission of CISA, which is the Cybersecurity and 12 Infrastructure Agency, the mission of it is to 13 hunt and harden. It's to find those bad actors 14 and help work with local and state 15 infrastructure, critical infrastructure entities 16 so that they can help them be prepared for such 17 cyber-attacks and that they can make sure that 18 they're hardening their systems to protect them 19 in the future, recognizing the vulnerabilities 20 that they have. 21 CISA has gotten far off mission. 22 They're using their resources in ways that was 23 never intended. The misinformation and 24 disinformation that they have stuck their toe 25 into and meddled with should be refocused back</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 32</p>
<p>1 So, the resources that the Department 2 of Homeland Security has needs to be utilized as 3 far as identifying those threats and being 4 proactive to prevent them but also protecting 5 civil rights and liberties in that process and 6 making sure that the department is on mission to 7 do what it was called to do, why it was created, 8 and what authorities that Congress and the Senate 9 has given them. 10 My hope is that Governor Landry and his 11 staff and his people and the people that attend 12 the Super Bowl know that the Department of 13 Homeland Security is their partner, is on watch 14 to protect them and to keep that event safe. I 15 hope all Americans know that leadership has 16 consequences. I hope that we can get through and 17 get your support for this nomination and get 18 confirmed quickly so that we can address the 19 threats that we currently face and make sure we 20 don't have any repeats of the day that we saw 21 just starting this year on New Year's Day. 22 SENATOR PETERS: In the last two years, 23 we have seen increasingly aggressive and 24 expansive cyber-attacks against our federal 25 agencies. Just last month, Chinese hackers</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 31</p>	<p>1 onto what their job is, and that is to support 2 critical infrastructure and to help our local and 3 small businesses and critical infrastructure at 4 the state level to have the resources and be 5 prepared for those cyber-attacks that they will 6 face. 7 Salt Typhoon was a campaign of 8 espionage by the PRC in China against our 9 telecoms where large amount of data was stolen 10 and taken, and people's private information was 11 taken as well. And we've also seen China and the 12 PRC go after our critical infrastructure with the 13 Volt Typhoon hack, and that was extremely 14 dangerous because there was no reason for them to 15 do that, just to steal people's data and 16 information. 17 The reason for them to go after that 18 was to control our critical infrastructure for 19 the ability to see if they could shut down a 20 water plant, a utility company. And that was to 21 cripple our country. So, these threats are real. 22 CISA needs to be much more effective, smaller, 23 more nimble to really fulfill their mission, 24 which is to hunt and to help harden our nation's 25 critical infrastructure.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 33</p>

<p>1 SENATOR PETERS: Thank you.</p> <p>2 GOVERNOR NOEM: Thank you.</p> <p>3 SENATOR JOHNSON: Senator Scott.</p> <p>4 SENATOR SCOTT: Governor,</p> <p>5 congratulations on your nomination.</p> <p>6 GOVERNOR NOEM: Thank you.</p> <p>7 SENATOR SCOTT: I think you're going to</p> <p>8 do a great job.</p> <p>9 GOVERNOR NOEM: Thank you.</p> <p>10 SENATOR SCOTT: I think it's great that</p> <p>11 you're a governor and you bring that expertise to</p> <p>12 the table. So, I just went through the campaign</p> <p>13 to get reelected, and it was after the Butler</p> <p>14 shooting. I had asked people at all my events.</p> <p>15 I say, "Raise your hand if you think the acting</p> <p>16 director of the Secret Service is going to tell</p> <p>17 us what happened." Not one person. I said,</p> <p>18 "What about Mayorkas? He's running HHS, what do</p> <p>19 you think, or Homeland Security. What do you</p> <p>20 think?" I said, "How about Christopher Wray,</p> <p>21 head of the FBI?" Not one person. Can you just</p> <p>22 talk about the importance of transparency and</p> <p>23 accountability in government and how you're going</p> <p>24 to bring that to the table?</p> <p>25 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yeah. Senator, Scott,</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 34</p>	<p>1 people there and being adequately staffed and</p> <p>2 resourced.</p> <p>3 But frankly, the leadership hasn't been</p> <p>4 honest about talking about it. We saw this with</p> <p>5 the drones over New Jersey as well, the federal</p> <p>6 government not answering the questions from the</p> <p>7 public. And when they finally got a straight</p> <p>8 answer out of President Trump, they felt</p> <p>9 reassured that somebody recognized that this was</p> <p>10 something they were questioning and that they</p> <p>11 deserved answers.</p> <p>12 My goal and my mission is to build</p> <p>13 trust. We will undertake a large job and a large</p> <p>14 duty that we have to fulfill, that the American</p> <p>15 people expect us to do by securing our border to</p> <p>16 make sure that our nation is a nation with</p> <p>17 borders or we're no nation at all, and that we</p> <p>18 are making sure that those criminal actors that</p> <p>19 are perpetuating violence in our communities and</p> <p>20 in our cities and towns and states are removed</p> <p>21 from this country, that there's consequences for</p> <p>22 breaking the law in our country again.</p> <p>23 There has to be consequences because</p> <p>24 when Americans break the law, there's</p> <p>25 consequences. And why would we ever allow</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 36</p>
<p>1 thank you for that question because that's what I</p> <p>2 have found across the country as well, and I know</p> <p>3 it's certainly true in my home state of South</p> <p>4 Dakota, is that people don't trust the federal</p> <p>5 government. They don't trust our leadership and</p> <p>6 this current administration that's in the White</p> <p>7 House right now to tell them the truth, to tell</p> <p>8 them the truth about what the threats really are</p> <p>9 about our agencies and departments when there are</p> <p>10 failures, addressing them and fixing it.</p> <p>11 The Secret Service is one of those</p> <p>12 perfect examples. They need leadership that</p> <p>13 understands why that Secret Service was created</p> <p>14 and what it needs to do. There's two elements</p> <p>15 really that the Secret Service is tasked with,</p> <p>16 and that is protective detail and then also</p> <p>17 investigations. Yet we see investigators within</p> <p>18 the Secret Service out there investigating</p> <p>19 antiquities and other things that are off mission</p> <p>20 when they should be focused on making sure we're</p> <p>21 addressing national security events with the</p> <p>22 protocols that are necessary and protecting the</p> <p>23 individuals that they're charged with and getting</p> <p>24 that skill set and training that are necessary.</p> <p>25 That's been compromised by not having enough</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 35</p>	<p>1 someone to come in from another country and not</p> <p>2 have consequences or allow them to continue to go</p> <p>3 forward and to commit rape and murders and other</p> <p>4 break other laws that endanger our society? So,</p> <p>5 we've had over 13,000 murders that are loose in</p> <p>6 this country that have come over that border.</p> <p>7 We've had almost 16,000 rapists and sexual</p> <p>8 assault perpetrators that are loose in this</p> <p>9 country right now. 425,000 plus people have</p> <p>10 criminal convictions that are here illegally in</p> <p>11 this country that our current administration's</p> <p>12 doing nothing to round them up and get them out</p> <p>13 of our country.</p> <p>14 We will be doing that immediately, and</p> <p>15 that will be the priority, and that is one of the</p> <p>16 reasons that today the American people have lost</p> <p>17 their trust. President Trump will build it back</p> <p>18 and know that their federal government is</p> <p>19 accountable to them and is working to put America</p> <p>20 first again.</p> <p>21 SENATOR SCOTT: So, Joe Biden</p> <p>22 completely opened on our southern border and</p> <p>23 dismantled our entire immigration system. As a</p> <p>24 former governor, I know that when the federal</p> <p>25 government policies are broken and failing</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 37</p>

<p>1 Americans, you see the impacts in your state just 2 like I did when I was a governor, and you take 3 the steps necessary to protect the families in 4 your state. I know you've done that. 5 One thing you did is you talked about 6 before you sent troops, our National Guard, to 7 the southern border. Can you talk more about how 8 Biden's open border policy has affected your 9 state and communities and the role your state 10 resources placed in helping secure the border? 11 GOVERNOR NOEM: We certainly have seen 12 the effects in South Dakota that many of your 13 states did. And I would say every state has seen 14 the effects of an open border in the policies 15 that have been under the Biden administration. 16 We saw increased crime, but we also saw increased 17 drug activity. We saw cartel in their affiliates 18 moving into our state to proliferate trafficking, 19 and we saw people being victimized and a lack of 20 accountability with the federal government. 21 So, when Texas was addressing the 22 situation and asked other governors for help, we 23 sent help. I know many of the other governors at 24 the time were sending law enforcement, but I made 25 the decision that at that time that it was more</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 38</p>	<p>1 security operations. They also did building of 2 the wall and partnered with Texas recognizing the 3 failures of the federal government. 4 The failures of the federal government 5 are significant, and we've seen our families and 6 communities devastated by those effects, by the 7 drug epidemic, by the trafficking that's going 8 on. They increased crime. And we recognize that 9 just because the federal government wasn't doing 10 their job, we could not fail our state. And I 11 needed to protect the people of South Dakota. 12 And the people of South Dakota were 13 overwhelmingly supportive of these deployments 14 and very proud of our National Guard. 15 SENATOR SCOTT: When I was governor of 16 Florida, there was a terrorist hack in Paris by 17 Syrian refugees. So, President Obama was 18 president, and I said, "I'd like to know if 19 you're going to send refugees to my state that 20 you give us some background on them." I assume 21 you vetted them and tell us what's going on. You 22 have to tell me, but you ought to tell our state 23 law enforcement and our local law enforcement 24 that they said, "Go jump in the lake." 25 (Indiscernible) meaner than that, but they said,</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 40</p>
<p>1 appropriate to send the National Guard that our 2 National Guard could be activated under Title 32 3 and sent to assist another state from the 4 invasion that was happening and because the 5 National Guard is trained for just such a 6 mission. 7 Because of this invasion, that it is a 8 war zone down there with what they are going to 9 see, the threats that they would see and that 10 they are trained specifically to interact with 11 other agencies, the National Guard is used to 12 falling in with other agencies and cooperating 13 with them and could do that seamlessly, and their 14 families and their communities are normalized to 15 them being deployed. 16 So, we have in South Dakota deployed 17 our National Guard to the southern border eight 18 different times. Two of them were federal 19 deployments that the Biden administration sent 20 them down there. One was to send our Lakota 21 helicopters, which were used for surveillance in 22 the drug interdiction that was going on down 23 there. But six other times, I sent them under 24 state activation to partner with Texas and other 25 states in securing our southern border. They did</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 39</p>	<p>1 "You have no rights as a governor," which had 2 made no sense. We had over 70,000 people come 3 here after Afghanistan on planes into this 4 country completely unvetted. They've never given 5 our governors any information. So, would you 6 change that? 7 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yes. The communication 8 between states and the federal government has 9 been absolutely broken, and that's what I love 10 about this committee, is you do have governors 11 sitting on this committee that have been in that 12 role as a commander in chief and have the 13 responsibility for being the CEOs of their state. 14 It's a different perspective than 15 serving. I served in Congress too, and both are 16 extremely important, and they're just different 17 in that responsibility that weighs on your 18 shoulder. I often told folks that that is the 19 thing that most times if something was going to 20 keep me up at night, it was the responsibility 21 that I had being commander in chief, recognizing 22 the decisions that I made. And I'm sure you had 23 this feeling as well, Senator Scott, as governor, 24 that impacted those families, those soldiers. 25 And it impacted their communities when we pulled</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 41</p>

<p>1 them out and the importance of that. 2 And when they were bringing refugees 3 into the country, I as well communicated that to 4 the federal government. They were bringing 5 refugees, and I asked how they were vetted, how 6 we were working with their home countries to find 7 out who they really were, what their intentions 8 were and why they were coming to the United 9 States and received no information from this 10 administration that that vetting process was 11 being done, that we knew where they're going. 12 In fact, they kept us in the dark and 13 didn't communicate to us even what states and 14 where those refugees were being placed. So, that 15 is something that we need to change when we have 16 programs that fall under the purview of the 17 Department of Homeland Security. There needs to 18 be communication, especially with the governor, 19 so that we can coordinate to ensure that it's the 20 right thing for that state. 21 SENATOR SCOTT: Thank you. 22 SENATOR JOHNSON: Senator Hassan. 23 SENATOR HASSAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. 24 And welcome, Governor Noem. I really appreciate 25 you being here. Welcome to your family as well.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 42</p>	<p>1 at the northern border recently, law enforcement 2 told me about the need for more personnel and 3 resources. We still don't have cell phone 4 coverage in a lot of the stretch of our northern 5 border. I've worked with Senator Kramer on 6 bipartisan legislation to strengthen our northern 7 border strategy because it's clear more support 8 is needed. So, Governor, if you're confirmed, 9 would you deploy additional full-time personnel 10 and upgrade equipment along the northern border? 11 GOVERNOR NOEM: Senator, I enjoyed our 12 meeting that we had and you identifying the 13 northern border issues that are going on, the 14 lack of security and the lack of technologies 15 that you really need to cover, some of the 16 landscapes that are there very different than the 17 southern border, some just as equally challenging 18 but all need to be addressed. 19 So, I definitely will be working with 20 you to ensure that our northern border is 21 adequately resourced as well, and we do have to 22 have the resources in order to be successful. 23 SENATOR HASSAN: Right. 24 GOVERNOR NOEM: That's something I want 25 to work with Congress, with the Senate and the</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 44</p>
<p>1 GOVERNOR NOEM: Thank you. 2 SENATOR HASSAN: And families do share 3 in this kind of public service, and we appreciate 4 them very much. As we discussed at our meeting 5 last month, as a former governor, I appreciate 6 the important responsibilities that governors 7 have to ensure the safety and security of their 8 communities, including by managing public safety 9 and emergency agencies. 10 And I will say that, in many ways, I 11 agree with some of the things that Senator Scott 12 just said about improving communication between 13 the Department of Homeland Security and governors 14 around who is being sent to states. It's a 15 critical issue and something that I was 16 frustrated by when I was governor. So, I look 17 forward to hearing more today about your 18 priorities if confirmed about how your experience 19 as governor would help you run the Department of 20 Homeland Security. 21 Let me just start by following up with 22 a question that Senator Peters had also touched 23 on. We have recently, in New Hampshire, seen a 24 dramatic increase in unauthorized border 25 crossings at the northern border. And when I was</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 43</p>	<p>1 House on to ensure that the resources are there 2 to meet the challenges that we have. We have not 3 fully utilized the technologies that are 4 available that are necessary to really secure 5 this country and to compete with those bad actors 6 which wish to infiltrate our country and having 7 the ability to utilize them will make us much 8 more safe. So, I'll work with you most 9 definitely ensuring the northern border is 10 protected. 11 SENATOR HASSAN: Well, I appreciate 12 that, and I just note too that at the same time, 13 there's real concern in New Hampshire and all 14 along the northern border that we strengthen the 15 border and have the resources we need. We also 16 have a really strong economic relationship with 17 our friends to the north and a lot of family 18 relationships. 19 So, I think it's important that we're 20 smart in the deployment of technology. We don't 21 want to impede that flow of economy and people 22 that's lawful, but we do want to make sure that 23 we have the resources we need. I want to turn to 24 the southern border now. 25</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 45</p>

<p>1 At the southern border, we need 2 significant technological investments to support 3 law enforcement personnel in their efforts to 4 catch fentanyl smugglers to stop human 5 traffickers and seize the cash and illegal guns 6 that criminals traffic southward to the cartels. 7 And we talked about this a little bit. 8 There's bipartisan support for these 9 investments, and I've worked with colleagues 10 including Senators Lankford and Cornyn on 11 legislation around these issues. Governor Noem, 12 could you identify specific technological 13 investments that you would make at the southern 14 border and are you willing to work with me on 15 increasing southbound inspections if you're 16 confirmed?</p> <p>17 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yes. Certainly, 18 Senator. You've heard President Trump talk about 19 the need to build a wall. And the wall and 20 infrastructure is critically important. But 21 also, at our 382 legal ports of entry, we need to 22 have technology so that flow can happen north and 23 south, and it can happen in a legal manner to 24 ensure that our commerce can continue to operate, 25 and that we can continue to make sure that we're</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 46</p>	<p>1 attack on power school, a cloud-based record 2 management system that contains personal 3 information about tens of millions of 4 kindergartners through high school seniors, 5 including many students and teachers in New 6 Hampshire. 7 This cyber-attack on power school comes 8 as schools and local governments across the 9 country have seen a surge in cyber-attacks on 10 their systems. And when a small of maybe a 11 thousand students or so has to pay \$2 million in 12 ransom, I want you to think about what that does 13 to one of our small communities. Right? So, 14 Governor Noem, if you're confirmed, how will you 15 empower the cybersecurity and infrastructure 16 security agency to improve the cybersecurity of 17 state and local governments in the United States?</p> <p>18 GOVERNOR NOEM: Well, thank you, 19 Senator. If I am confirmed and have the 20 opportunity to serve as secretary of this 21 department, I'll be following the constitution 22 and the rule of law and then getting these 23 departments back on mission to why they were 24 created and why they are existing. 25 What CISA should be doing is helping</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 48</p>
<p>1 also secure. 2 I think de minimis shipments are a 3 concern and the need to look at those and how 4 traffickers and fentanyl distributors are using 5 that. I think we also need to use scanners 6 surveillance operations. There's new 7 technologies out there to cooperate with 8 satellites in some area where the topography does 9 not necessarily facilitate having actual 10 infrastructure and then also the ability to make 11 sure that we're utilizing that technology that 12 allows us to know what is going south that might 13 be fueling some of the violence that ends up 14 coming back north and ensuring that we're 15 stopping that before it has the chance to supply 16 those cartel and bad actors that would come in.</p> <p>17 SENATOR HASSAN: Yeah. I really 18 appreciate that because the southbound flow, 19 particularly of cash and weapons, fuels the 20 cartels and strengthens them. 21 GOVERNOR NOEM: Absolutely. 22 SENATOR HASSAN: And it's something 23 that we really have to focus on. I also want to 24 follow up on the issue of cyber security. 25 Recently, criminals launched a successful cyber-</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 47</p>	<p>1 those small entities, those schools, those local 2 city governments, the state governments, and the 3 small businesses that are critical infrastructure 4 that don't have the resources to stay on top of 5 the critical protections that they need to enact. 6 SENATOR HASSAN: Well, let me follow up 7 just quickly on that one point. It's something 8 we discussed when we had our meeting. I worked 9 with Senator Cornyn on a bipartisan bill. It 10 became law that created a cybersecurity grant 11 program for state and local governments. This is 12 an addition to each state getting a cyber 13 coordinator to help on the ground. 14 We discussed this program, and I know 15 you as governor had some reservations about the 16 structure of the program, but if confirmed, will 17 you commit to working with Congress to adjust it? 18 I'd love your input about what gave you pause as 19 governor. I think there were only two governors 20 who didn't participate in the program. And I 21 hope that as we work on the concerns you have, 22 you'd work with me to adjust and reauthorize the 23 program. 24 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yes. All grants within 25 the department will be evaluated when I come in</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 49</p>

<p>1 and be looked at to see what we can do to make 2 sure that they're actually fulfilling the mission 3 to which they were established. What I would say 4 about the cybersecurity grants in South Dakota, 5 when I came in as governor, one of my main 6 priorities was to bring the next industry into 7 the state. And I determined that that would be 8 technology and cybersecurity.</p> <p>9 In fact, we have Dakota State 10 University in our state, which is a cybersecurity 11 national leader in training those cyber warriors 12 that we need to protect us and keep us safe. 13 I've since then partnered to grow and double the 14 size of that school. We train a lot of NSA 15 employees in South Dakota. And so, understanding 16 cybersecurity and my experience and that I think 17 is critically important to the department and 18 bringing it to the table to do this.</p> <p>19 You talked about why we didn't take 20 that cybersecurity grant in South Dakota, and 21 it's because the requirements of that grant 22 would've caused me to grow my state government. 23 The administration costs of it would've been much 24 more than what it been able to facilitate at the 25 local level. And our state was already</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 50</p>	<p>1 Mayorkas has been an absolute disgrace to that 2 department and frankly to this country. And I'm 3 delighted to see you willing to step up and 4 serve. Let me just ask you something. I 5 repeatedly asked your predecessor when he sat 6 where you're sitting, whether the southern border 7 was secure. And he repeatedly told me under 8 oath, "It is secure, Senator." And he repeatedly 9 said under oath, "Our policies are working, 10 Senator," meaning the Biden administration 11 policies that, of course, gave us this 12 devastating open border. So, let me just ask 13 you, is the southern border secure as we find it 14 today?</p> <p>15 GOVERNOR NOEM: Senator, no. The 16 southern border is not secure today. But in just 17 three days, we will have a new president in this 18 country, President Donald J. Trump. And he will 19 secure our border.</p> <p>20 SENATOR HAWLEY: That is refreshing 21 candor. I'm glad to hear it. Let me ask you 22 about a young man from my state. This is Travis 23 Wolfe who's 12 years old when he was killed just 24 over a year ago by an illegal migrant who mowed 25 him down, and I choose my words carefully, mowed</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 52</p>
<p>1 proactively helping these individuals that needed 2 the resources to secure their systems.</p> <p>3 SENATOR HASSAN: Well, I appreciate 4 that. I'm way over time. There were very few 5 requirements purposely in that grant program 6 other than to make sure the money was being spent 7 the way we authorized. But let's continue to 8 talk about that.</p> <p>9 GOVERNOR NOEM: Thank you.</p> <p>10 SENATOR HASSAN: Thank you.</p> <p>11 SENATOR JOHNSON: Senator Hawley.</p> <p>12 SENATOR HAWLEY: Thank you, Mr. 13 Chairman. Governor Noem, welcome. 14 Congratulations on your nomination. I'm 15 delighted to see you here. I do notice the 16 Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee is over 17 your shoulder there. I have to question your 18 judgment about who your friends are based on that 19 through the great Chairman from the state of 20 Missouri. It's fantastic to have you here.</p> <p>21 The Department of Homeland Security is 22 not particularly old, but you already have the, 23 what I hope, will soon be the distinction of 24 succeeding the worst secretary in the history of 25 the Department of Homeland Security. Alejandro</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 51</p>	<p>1 him down in a motor vehicle, hit him head on 2 doing 75 and a 40, killed him. Others were 3 severely injured. Just yesterday, a witness 4 sitting where you are sitting today told this 5 committee that migrant crime is and I quote, "Not 6 an actual concern." Not an actual concern.</p> <p>7 In a hearing before this committee 8 advising us to drop the Laken Riley act and not 9 focus on migrant crime. In my state with the 10 death of people like Travis Wolfe and Officer 11 David Lee who was assaulted and killed in St. 12 Louis and officers in Kansas City who have been 13 assaulted by illegal migrants and others who have 14 been carjacked and stabbed, would you agree with 15 me that migrant crime sure as heck is an actual 16 concern and that you intend to do something about 17 it?</p> <p>18 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yes, Senator. 19 Absolutely. And I'm so sorry about Travis. My 20 prayers go out to his family. I can't even 21 imagine what that is like, and thank you for 22 telling his story because there's so many 23 families in this country that have that same 24 story, and they don't understand why the federal 25 government is allowing people to come into this</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 53</p>

<p>1 country illegally and then perpetuate crimes 2 against their people, and then give them 3 resources and shelter and food and debit cards to 4 go take care of their families when they go to 5 work every single day to make sure that they're 6 providing for their families and are held 7 accountable to when they break our laws. 8 SENATOR HAWLEY: Let me ask you this, 9 will you work with President Trump to reinstate 10 the Remain in Mexico program that the President 11 had in place in his first term, which does so 12 much to ensure that those who would seek to abuse 13 our asylum system are not allowed into the 14 country and those who have legitimate asylum 15 claims, their claims are processed in due order 16 and in due course, but they wait in Mexico until 17 those claims are fully processed. Will you work 18 to reinstate that program? 19 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yes, Senator. The 20 president and I have talked extensively about 21 this, and we'll 100 percent partner with him to 22 reinstate the Remain in Mexico policy and make 23 sure that it's in place. 24 SENATOR HAWLEY: Fantastic. I think 25 Travis might be alive today if that policy had</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 54</p>	<p>1 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yes, Senator. If 2 confirmed, and I have the opportunity to be 3 secretary on day one, CBP One will be shut down. 4 There's data and information in there that we 5 will preserve so that we can ensure we know who's 6 coming into this country and who's already here 7 that we need to go find. But also, we make sure 8 that there's another program, CHNV, which I'm 9 sure you're very familiar with, where our federal 10 government actually paid to fly people into this 11 country directly from other countries without any 12 vetting or knowing who they are. So, there's 13 several of these programs that need to be 14 eliminated, and we need to ensure that we're 15 following legal immigration laws. 16 SENATOR HAWLEY: I'm glad you just 17 mentioned CHNV. This is a mass parole program. 18 Of course, as you know, our law allows parole in 19 only very limited circumstances. There are two 20 circumstances, and it requires case by case 21 evaluation. The present administration soon to 22 be gone has granted mass parole in direct 23 defiance of the law, not case by case evaluation. 24 The CHNV program is one of those instances. Will 25 you put a stop to this abuse of our parole law</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 56</p>
<p>1 been in place. Let me ask you about CBP One, the 2 phone app, that I've called concierge service for 3 illegal Immigrants. I'm sure you're familiar 4 with it. This was the Biden administration's 5 effort to allow asylum seekers to apply ahead of 6 time using their phones but not actually to 7 provide any evidence that they needed asylum. 8 There is a newspaper report, a press report that 9 said the only problem with the app is it never 10 asks users are you seeking asylum? They don't 11 ask for any asylum evidence. They simply release 12 these so-called asylum seekers who use the app 13 into the country on parole. 14 Sometimes, they're never given a 15 hearing. The Inspector General actually did a 16 report, a full investigation report on CBP One 17 and found that, frequently, users of this app 18 were claiming the same addresses in the United 19 States as their intended destination, even though 20 they didn't know each other, they weren't family 21 connections. In other words, it has been 22 completely abused. And the idea that the federal 23 government would pay for this kind of concierge 24 service for Illegals, I think, is outrageous. 25 Will you end the use of the CBP One app?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 55</p>	<p>1 and our asylum system? 2 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yes, we will go back to 3 case by case evaluation of these parole cases and 4 ensure that we have more resources, if you will 5 partner with us to make sure that our legal 6 immigration system is fully utilized, that we 7 have more judges, more immigration courts so that 8 we can process people legally and make sure that 9 they are going through that process rather than 10 like Joe Biden has done, use this an excuse to 11 allow people to come into our country with no 12 consequences. 13 SENATOR HAWLEY: Let me ask you about 14 another low light, not a highlight, but a low 15 light of this last administration and DHS. Your 16 predecessor, the current secretary of DHS, 17 established a disinformation board using taxpayer 18 resources to police speech on the internet and 19 elsewhere to tag American citizens' viewpoints as 20 either legitimate or not legitimate and use the 21 power of the state to censor them, including 22 having them removed and perhaps penalized. 23 This has got to be the darkest chapter, 24 I think, in DHS's short history. He eventually 25 withdrew the board under intense criticism but</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 57</p>

<p>1 has never fully repudiated it and never promised 2 not to do it again. Will you pledge to us here 3 today that, under your leadership, there will 4 never be a disinformation board or anything like 5 it at DHS, and you will be a champion for the 6 free speech and first amendment rights of all 7 Americans?</p> <p>8 GOVERNOR NOEM: Senator, there will not 9 be a board such as that under my leadership at 10 the Department of Homeland Security.</p> <p>11 SENATOR HAWLEY: Fantastic. Let me ask 12 you my remaining seconds, just one more thing 13 about the Secret Service. You've mentioned this, 14 and I'm so glad that you did this committee. And 15 it has been bipartisan. This committee has done 16 bipartisan work on the attempted assassinations 17 or the assassination attempts, I should perhaps 18 say, of the former president, the future 19 president, soon to be the president, President 20 Trump. We were stymied at every turn, and I 21 should use the present tense. We are currently 22 being stymied at every turn by the current Secret 23 Service leadership and, frankly, by the 24 leadership of DHS who have refused to turn over 25 documents who refused to make people available</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 58</p>	<p>1 it was a bipartisan report, an investigation that 2 this committee conducted. And I appreciate you 3 focusing on that, and I'll work with you to get 4 the information so that you have the truth of 5 really what happened there in the failures so 6 they can be fixed.</p> <p>7 SENATOR HAWLEY: Thank you. That's a 8 great place to end in a high note as I see my 9 friend, Senator Blumenthal, who did fantastic 10 work on this effort, and it will be an incredible 11 new day and incredibly refreshing day to have a 12 DHA secretary who will tell us the truth, who 13 will be honest with us about the facts, honest 14 with the American people and who will enforce our 15 law. And I know you'll do that. Governor Noem, 16 I look forward to supporting your nomination. 17 Congratulations.</p> <p>18 GOVERNOR NOEM: Thank you.</p> <p>19 SENATOR JOHNSON: Senator Blumenthal.</p> <p>20 SENATOR BLUMENTHAL: Thanks, Senator 21 Johnson. Welcome, Governor Noem. And thank you 22 for being here. Thank you for visiting with me 23 and thank you to your family for their service as 24 well. Let me begin on a high note thanking 25 Senator Hawley for his leadership on the effort</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 60</p>
<p>1 for interviews.</p> <p>2 We finally had to pass my own law in 3 this committee, which we unanimously adopted a 4 law statute, mind you, which would require DHS 5 and Secret Service to turn over relevant 6 information to us about the assassination 7 attempts. It's unbelievable. When you come to 8 office to this office, I hope very soon will you 9 pledge to us that you will open the books on all 10 of the facts associated and around these 11 assassination attempts that you will make 12 available to us and to the public, most 13 importantly, all the facts so that we can ensure 14 that this never happens again and that the needed 15 reforms in the Secret Service are put into 16 effect.</p> <p>17 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yeah. Senator, if I am 18 the Secretary of Homeland Security, I will 19 certainly work with you to build transparency and 20 make sure the facts are shared with you and your 21 committee. I know that you've been very 22 frustrated by the lack of transparency from the 23 department. And I want to thank those of you 24 that have worked on that report that was put 25 together on these assassination attempts. I know</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 59</p>	<p>1 that I led with him to essentially get some basic 2 facts out of the Secret Service when we were 3 investigating Senator Johnson and I as leaders of 4 the permanent subcommittee on investigation, 5 helping you lead it with the Chairman and ranking 6 member here.</p> <p>7 And I'm hoping that you've read our 8 report and that you will agree to begin 9 implementing its recommendations, which call for 10 major reforms, in my view, a house cleaning top 11 to bottom in the Secret Service and greater 12 transparency with this committee and with the 13 American public.</p> <p>14 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yes, sir. I will 15 certainly work with you to do that and to work to 16 make sure that we have that transparency, and the 17 committee has the information that it needs to do 18 due diligence of its oversight.</p> <p>19 SENATOR BLUMENTHAL: Our investigation 20 is continuing, Senator Johnson, and I have 21 discussed it. And we will be making more 22 requests to pursue the fact-finding that is so 23 important. I want to ask you about disaster 24 relief. California is on fire. The fire's 25 raging. There are going to leave destruction and</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 61</p>

<p>1 devastation that is heartbreaking. 2 I am really disappointed with some of 3 the statements that President-elect Trump has 4 made, for example, saying that quote, "We won't 5 give him," referring to Governor Newsom, "money 6 to put out all his fires. And if we don't give 7 him money to put out fires, he's got. 8 SENATOR BLUMENTHAL: ... a problem. 9 The specter is there of potential discrimination 10 based on politics, withholding money from 11 California or other states. It's not an 12 unfounded fear. In the last administration, 13 there were public reports about President Trump 14 withholding money from the State of Washington 15 because of his disagreements with Governor 16 Inslee. Connecticut, like the rest of the 17 nation, suffers from these natural disasters. 18 Most recently in August, we were hit by major 19 flooding, and these natural disasters are going 20 to become more frequent, as will be the need for 21 the federal government to meet the requests for 22 declarations of natural disaster. I assume you 23 will agree with me that withholding disaster 24 relief by President Trump or any other chief 25 executive of the United States is a violation of</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 62</p>	<p>1 that's a yes. 2 GOVERNOR NOEM: I don't speak to 3 hypotheticals, which is what you're asking me to 4 do. But what I will tell you is that as 5 secretary, I will do the same. I will deliver 6 the programs as the laws dictate. 7 SENATOR BLUMENTHAL: Well, it's more 8 than a hypothetical, with all due respect, and I 9 apologize for interrupting you, but my time is 10 limited, as you know, as a veteran of these 11 hearings. It's more than a hypothetical. It's 12 based on experience with President Trump 13 withholding money from Washington State and 14 elsewhere. I need to know from you, will you 15 stand up to the President and say, "No, the 16 Constitution and the Impoundment Act requires us, 17 for example, to allocate the 100 billion dollars 18 that we have just appropriated in the last 19 session to states like Connecticut \$3 million, 20 Texas, \$10 million, almost every one of the 21 states represented here." Will you say no to the 22 President if he withholds that money? 23 GOVERNOR NOEM: Sir, I don't know about 24 the scenarios that you're referencing with 25 President Trump, but what I will tell you is that</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 64</p>
<p>1 his duty and of law. 2 GOVERNOR NOEM: Well, Senator 3 leadership has consequences and looking at the 4 tragedy that's happening in California is -- 5 SENATOR BLUMENTHAL: I want to ask you 6 yes or no, with all due respect, it's an easy -- 7 GOVERNOR NOEM: What's happening in 8 California is the ramification of many decisions 9 over many years. But under my leadership at the 10 Department of Homeland Security, there will be no 11 political bias to how disaster relief is 12 delivered to the American people. 13 SENATOR BLUMENTHAL: So, if President 14 Trump were to say to you, "We're going to 15 withhold money from Connecticut or Michigan or 16 any of the states, Iowa, because we don't like 17 the governor or we don't like the politics of the 18 state," you would stand up to him and say, "Mr. 19 president, we need to allocate that money." 20 GOVERNOR NOEM: Senator, in three days, 21 President Trump will take an oath to uphold the 22 Constitution and the rule of law in this country, 23 and he will do that, and I'll be glad to have him 24 back. 25 SENATOR BLUMENTHAL: And I assume</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 63</p>	<p>1 if given the chance to be Secretary of Homeland 2 Security, that I will deliver the programs 3 according to the law and that it will be done 4 with no political bias, and if the programs 5 change or if you decide to change the rule of 6 law, then I will follow that while adhering to 7 the Constitution. 8 SENATOR BLUMENTHAL: So, you pledge to 9 allocate and distribute that 100 billion dollars? 10 GOVERNOR NOEM: According to how the 11 program is written with no political bias. 12 SENATOR BLUMENTHAL: Thank you. 13 GOVERNOR NOEM: Every American deserves 14 to be there and have disaster relief the same as 15 their neighbors. 16 SENATOR BLUMENTHAL: Basically, 17 following the law. 18 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yes. 19 SENATOR BLUMENTHAL: Let me ask you, 20 Senator Peters asked you about homegrown 21 terrorists. The New Orleans tragedy was the 22 result of a homegrown terrorist born in this 23 country radicalized by ISIS and it reflects the 24 reason why the intelligence community, the FBI, 25 almost all of our law enforcement has said</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 65</p>

<p>1 repeatedly, domestic violent extremism is the 2 most lethal and persistent threat to our 3 security. That terrorist was radicalized by 4 ISIS. The investigation is underway, we don't 5 know all the facts, but we do know that he was a 6 military veteran, and ISIS was responsible for 7 radicalizing him. Shouldn't we focus on ISIS as 8 a threat to this country's security?</p> <p>9 GOVERNOR NOEM: Senator, certainly we 10 should be focused on all threats to this nation's 11 security. That's the mission of the Department 12 of Homeland Security and homegrown terrorism is 13 growing. We have more and more incidences. The 14 tragedy we saw and the terrorist attack in New 15 Orleans was --</p> <p>16 SENATOR BLUMENTHAL: What will you do 17 to combat it? What will you do to stop ISIS and 18 other extremist organization from radicalizing 19 people in this country?</p> <p>20 GOVERNOR NOEM: Well, certainly 21 Senator, I'll continue to work with the 22 administration and our partners and the 23 Department of Defense, the intelligence agencies 24 also within Secretary of State and the other 25 branches and cabinet officials to make sure we're</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 66</p>	<p>1 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yeah, I look forward to 2 working with you.</p> <p>3 SENATOR PAUL: Senator Ernst.</p> <p>4 SENATOR ERNST: Thank you, Senator 5 Johnson. Governor Noem, thank you so much for 6 being here today and I want to thank you for your 7 continuing service, the service that you had as a 8 member of Congress, the service that you have 9 displayed as a governor of the great State of 10 South Dakota, our neighbor to the northwest, and 11 for being willing to step up and take on this 12 immense responsibility. So, thank you so very 13 much.</p> <p>14 We had such a good discussion when you 15 came to my office in the last several weeks, and 16 we talked about the importance of securing our 17 border and fixing our broken immigration system. 18 And I'd like to start today by sharing a story 19 about one of my constituents from Council Bluffs, 20 Iowa. And what we have seen through this broken 21 border is tragedy that strikes so many families 22 across the United States. So, very similar to 23 the story that was shared by my colleague from 24 Missouri with his constituent Mr. Wolf. I have a 25 young woman by the name of Sarah Root who</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 68</p>
<p>1 bringing all resources to bear to identify and to 2 stop these types of terrorist activities. What I 3 would say is the cybersecurity and intelligence 4 elements that we have within the Department of 5 Homeland Security have been incredibly siloed. 6 They have not communicated with other 7 intelligence agencies like they should and 8 partnered. INA has some interaction but not 9 enough and we also need to have CISA have 10 interaction with the FBI, CIA to make sure 11 they're working together to stop these types of 12 threats and identify when they're growing among 13 our citizens and how they become radicalized.</p> <p>14 SENATOR BLUMENTHAL: My time has 15 expired. This area of questioning I think is 16 supremely important. I know there's a lot of 17 focus on the border. We all want more border 18 security. We want to stop migrant crime, but 19 let's not take our eye off the ball. The 20 governor of Louisiana for the Super Bowl ought to 21 be really riveted on the potential for homegrown 22 terrorism as a threat, and I hope that you will 23 help him and other governors to do their duty to 24 protect the people of the United States from that 25 homegrown terrorist threat. Thank you.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 67</p>	<p>1 encountered tragedy on January 31st, 9 years ago. 2 So, Sarah Root was struck and killed by an 3 illegal immigrant who was drunk driving. He was 4 driving at three times the legal limit of 5 alcohol, and Sarah's killer was bonded out, 6 bonded out before the Roots laid her to rest. He 7 fled the country and has not been seen or heard 8 from since. The Root family has not seen 9 justice. So, Governor, how do you plan to 10 prioritize the detention and deportation of 11 illegal immigrants like Sarah's killer?</p> <p>12 GOVERNOR NOEM: Well, yes, Senator, 13 thank you for telling Sarah's story. I remember 14 when this happened because it was so close to 15 home and so devastating for her and her family 16 and the entire State of Iowa and our country. 17 President Trump is focused on making sure that 18 these types of situations don't happen again, 19 that we don't continue to lose our children and 20 our family members to illegal immigrants that 21 come in and perpetuate crime with no 22 accountability and then are released with no 23 consequences. So, the number one priority of the 24 president is to secure the border and to deport 25 these criminal actors immediately and as soon as</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 69</p>

<p>1 possible. They will be the number one priority 2 to make our communities safer and so that we 3 don't have this kind of situation going forward. 4 In fact, people, I think when they 5 first heard my name being mentioned and nominated 6 for the Department of Homeland Security, maybe 7 thought it was a little bit of a surprise, like, 8 "Oh, I didn't think about Kristi doing that job." 9 But I tell people the reason that I asked for it 10 is because I knew it was the President's number 11 one priority. I knew that it needed to have 12 someone in the position that would do what the 13 President promised the American people, would be 14 strong enough to do it and follow through to make 15 sure that we're protecting our communities and 16 America. But that also came at it from a 17 perspective of how these families feel, that was 18 a wife and a mom and a grandmother and would be 19 able to stand up and communicate to the American 20 people what we were doing and why we were, 21 because it's what they asked us to do. 22 I have three grandchildren and one more 23 on the way, and when I look at Little Miss Addie 24 every day, I just think, "What kind of a country 25 is she going to grow up in? What kind of a</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 70</p>	<p>1 making sure that any communications are secured, 2 any work is secured. And to that, I know the 3 Biden Administration has put a huge emphasis on 4 the cyber bureaucracy, but they haven't really 5 done anything about it, and they haven't given 6 any authority to those that are enforcing the 7 standards. So, we need to enforce the standards 8 that are set forth to make sure the cyber 9 security is truly there, but what can DHS do one, 10 with telework how do we get the employees back, 11 and then two, how do we make sure that our 12 systems are secure from these cyber-attacks? 13 GOVERNOR NOEM: Well, Senator, thank 14 you for focusing on remote work and the need to 15 get people back in their offices and accountable 16 to the work that they do. In fact, I've heard 17 since being nominated for this position that many 18 of the agencies within the department are not 19 showing up. They're not doing their jobs. But 20 even FEMA, who is responsible for disaster 21 response, that they have the alternative, some of 22 these employees do not even respond to a 23 disaster, which might explain the horrific 24 results that we saw in North Carolina when they 25 had such a terrible disaster that impacted</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 72</p>
<p>1 country will we leave her and her brother and a 2 sister?" And I don't want them to think that 3 their grandma sat on the sidelines and didn't do 4 all that she could. So, I will enforce the 5 Constitution and the law, and I will make sure 6 that when people enact horrific things like this 7 that happened to Sarah and her family, that there 8 will be consequences for it. 9 SENATOR ERNST: Yeah, absolutely. And 10 as a fellow grandma, I know that you are 11 perfectly positioned to enforce this. 12 I do want to move on to another topic 13 that we visited about in my office. So, I'm the 14 founder and the chair of the DOGE Senate Caucus, 15 and so we do need greater government efficiency, 16 and I do believe in order to do that, we need 17 less of our employees teleworking and more of 18 those government workers back in the office 19 working for our constituents. And to that end, 20 it ties together then too. We just found out 21 that the Treasury Department had a cyber-attack 22 on December 8th from China, and no surprise here, 23 they access servers through work from home 24 software. So, it all ties together. 25 We need more people back in the offices</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 71</p>	<p>1 families and communities, and FEMA failed them so 2 miserably. If It's not even responsibility of 3 them to show up when terrible things happen, what 4 other day-to-day activities are not getting done 5 because they're working from home or not doing 6 their job at all? 7 You talked about cyber security and the 8 need to ensure that our systems are safe and 9 secure. One of the things that disturbs me the 10 most is that we don't necessarily even know how 11 some of these espionage attacks that have 12 infiltrated our systems have happened. We don't 13 know how to stop them yet. We don't have the 14 knowledge and that our departments and 15 intelligence agencies and cybersecurity agencies 16 have become siloed and aren't working together to 17 stay in front of these bad actors. But many 18 times, our most vulnerable area happens at the 19 state and local level. Some of these smaller 20 entities that feeds information into our systems 21 is where they choose to infiltrate and get our 22 data and to really hold for ransom many of these 23 companies and then impact our federal systems as 24 well. 25 So, one of the first meetings I had</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 73</p>

<p>1 when I was elected governor with the former 2 governor during the transition was, he said, "The 3 number one priority you're going to have as 4 governor is to secure our systems." 5 SENATOR ERNST: Yes. 6 GOVERNOR NOEM: He said, "Our systems 7 are so antiquated, and we've had over 16,000 8 hacking attempts in just the last month. You 9 need to secure our systems to get it done." So, 10 that was a priority for me and to do that, and we 11 fully funded it and got it done in South Dakota 12 and it's being implemented today. I look forward 13 to doing that at the federal level to make sure 14 that people's data and information is safe, but 15 also our country is safe from these bad actors 16 that have a plan to take us out. 17 SENATOR ERNST: Well, thank you. My 18 time has expired, but I do want to end on a note 19 that another thing that I do truly appreciate 20 about you and your nomination is that as a 21 governor, you have worked with those local 22 constituencies as well and those local 23 governments, and I know that this will be an 24 incredible strength that will ensure continued 25 success for you within the department. So, thank</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 74</p>	<p>1 that he's in charge of our nation's borders. So, 2 I guess, again, I'd just like to go back to you. 3 How are you going to work with Mr. Homan? What 4 is the division there? I'm trying to get a 5 better sense of who's in charge. 6 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yeah. Tom Homan is an 7 incredible human being who has over 30 years of 8 experience at the border and the insight and 9 wisdom and he -- 10 SENATOR KIM: Incredible experience, I 11 get that. I'm just trying to think through 12 decision-making process when it comes to your 13 work. For instance, will he be giving orders 14 directly to CBP, ICE, USCIS? 15 GOVERNOR NOEM: Tom Homan has a direct 16 line to the President. He is an advisor to the 17 President, the border Czar. I, obviously, will 18 be if nominated and confirmed and put into the 19 position of being the Department of Homeland 20 Security Secretary and responsible for the 21 authorities that we have and the actions that we 22 take. 23 SENATOR KIM: I say this because I 24 actually want to make sure that we're empowering 25 the next Secretary of Homeland Security.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 76</p>
<p>1 you, Governor, very much. Thank you, Mr. Chair. 2 SENATOR PAUL: Senator Kim. 3 SENATOR KIM: Thank you, Chairman. 4 Governor, it's good to see you. 5 GOVERNOR NOEM: Good to see you again 6 too. 7 SENATOR KIM: Thanks for coming before 8 our committee. I wanted to just ask you not just 9 about your work, but how it's going to fit into 10 the broader incoming Trump Administration and 11 particular, I guess, I'm uncertain about roles 12 and responsibilities regarding your position and 13 Tom Homan's. I guess, I just want to ask you 14 just point-blank who's going to be in charge of 15 the border? 16 GOVERNOR NOEM: Well, the president 17 will be in charge of the border. It's a national 18 security issue, and the president is in charge of 19 this country and has made a promise to the 20 American people, and we will fulfill his agenda. 21 SENATOR KIM: Well, that was a good 22 answer, it's the answer I would've given as well, 23 but I guess I got confused. When Trump made the 24 announcement about Tom Homan, he said, "I'm 25 pleased to announce that Tom Homan," and said</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 75</p>	<p>1 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yes. 2 SENATOR KIM: In the legislation that 3 was codified by Congress and moved forward that 4 started this after September 11th, said "All 5 functions of all offices, employees and 6 organizational units of the department are vested 7 in the secretary." So, I guess the reason why I 8 mentioned this is I've just seen some quotes from 9 Mr. Homan where he said, "I'll be making 10 decisions on border security and deportation." 11 He was asked in another interview about the 12 stronger role that he'll play, and he said, 13 "Absolutely, I'll be making decisions on how we 14 do the border." 15 So, I just raise that as a concern of 16 mine because not only is that about the function 17 of our executive branch, but also the 18 capabilities of this committee to be able to 19 properly do our constitutional duties for 20 oversight. The ability for us to be able to have 21 that conversation. We can talk to you, engage 22 with you, that is the direct way, but if he is 23 going to be making decisions, then he should come 24 before this committee as well. And I know that 25 that's something where, as far as I know, his</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 77</p>

<p>1 role will be directly at the White House, is not 2 something that will be under the purview directly 3 of this committee. So, I just wanted to raise 4 those concerns.</p> <p>5 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yeah, yeah. Tom and I 6 work very well together and talk and communicate 7 all the time, and we'll be working together on a 8 daily basis when we're in our positions under the 9 new administration. And I would say there's no 10 authorities being planned to be taken away from 11 the department or myself if I'm in the role, and 12 we'll continue to oversee CPP --</p> <p>13 SENATOR KIM: But it sends some mixed 14 signals. You can understand how people in my 15 home state, maybe around the country, when they 16 hear Mr. Homan saying, "I'm making the 17 decisions." When they hear President-elect Trump 18 say he's in charge of our border. So, I urge 19 that we're going to try to do our best to try to 20 make sure we're empowering the department, 21 empowering the next secretary because that's 22 where our laws are invested in our decision- 23 making.</p> <p>24 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yeah. Well, thank you 25 Senator, and we'll make sure you have all the</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 78</p>	<p>1 get into specifics about what organizations that 2 are out there. So, I just wanted to get a sense 3 of your knowledge of the organizations.</p> <p>4 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yes, sir. You have all 5 the traditional terrorist organizations that have 6 always threatened the United States, but I would 7 also say --</p> <p>8 SENATOR KIM: Such as?</p> <p>9 GOVERNOR NOEM: I would say Hamas, 10 ISIS, continuing down that path of those 11 terrorist organizations. But we'll continue to 12 also focus though not just on those, but also the 13 cartels, their partnership with the Chinese and 14 what they are doing. Listen, I've told people 15 for years, for over 30 years, I've worked on 16 national policy, on food policy, on agriculture 17 policy, and I've seen the Chinese agenda to 18 infiltrate our country, control our food supply 19 chain, but also their manipulation of their 20 currency and stealing our IP. And now I believe 21 that this fentanyl crisis that they have flooded 22 our country with is geared and the purpose of it 23 is to kill our next generation of Americans. It 24 is to control us.</p> <p>25 SENATOR KIM: No, I don't discount the</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 80</p>
<p>1 information that you need. And Tom working 2 directly with the president and I working 3 directly with the president, hope to help you get 4 all that you need to reassured that the 5 authorities will stay the same as they currently 6 are, but we will continue to work to secure that 7 border and make sure that we're working together 8 in that way.</p> <p>9 SENATOR KIM: I want to just switch 10 gears about you raised the concerns about 11 terrorism, especially foreign terrorist groups. 12 I guess I just want to ask you, what are the 13 major foreign terrorist groups that are... Well, 14 first of all, what are the major foreign 15 terrorist groups that are out there that we're 16 tracking, which are the ones that are concerns to 17 us in terms of potentially trying to inspire or 18 coordinate an attack upon us? And if you can, 19 just give me a sense of what their current 20 capabilities are to try to enact that.</p> <p>21 GOVERNOR NOEM: Well, I think we face a 22 lot of threats, Senator, and since I'm not in the 23 role today, I shouldn't get into specifics with 24 you, but I think over years the --</p> <p>25 SENATOR KIM: Well, you can at least</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 79</p>	<p>1 importance of those --</p> <p>2 GOVERNOR NOEM: So, when you focus on 3 one or two groups, I think it takes your eye off 4 the ball as to where all the threats could come 5 from. We just spent a significant amount of time 6 talking about homegrown terrorism as well and 7 about --</p> <p>8 SENATOR KIM: Correct. And I'm glad 9 we're having that conversation. But the reason 10 why I mentioned it, I was not trying to quiz you 11 or anything of that nature. It's just that when 12 the Department of Homeland Security, when their 13 threat assessment for 2025 lists three 14 organizations, lists Al Qaeda, lists ISIS, in 15 particular ISIS Khorasan, and the IRGC, and the 16 threat from Iran, I just want to make sure that I 17 get it. You're talking about the importance of 18 the border. We all understand that we want to 19 work with the incoming administration to try to 20 have an orderly process with that. But I just 21 want to make sure in particular with DHS, the 22 primary mission, if we look at the founding 23 legislation, the primary mission, the very first 24 mission is prevent terrorist attacks within the 25 United States and do everything we can to</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 81</p>

<p>1 minimize that type of threat. 2 So, yes, I do think it's important for 3 us to focus in on one, two, or three or just 4 wherever these terrorist groups are at. Yes, 5 yes, I know that part of that effort to try to 6 minimize terrorist attacks is through the work 7 that we try to do to secure our borders, all of 8 them: air, sea, and land. But the primary 9 mission still is about preventing terrorism, not 10 just the border security. That's a tool to be 11 able to accomplish that. So, I just raised that 12 with you. I want to make sure that the next 13 Homeland Security Secretary has a very detailed 14 knowledge and understanding about the terrorist 15 groups, their capabilities, and is tracking that 16 on a absolute daily basis, and that they 17 understand that is their top mission. And with 18 that, I'll yield back to the Chairman. 19 SENATOR PAUL: Senator Johnson. 20 SENATOR JOHNSON: Governor Noem, 21 welcome and thank you -- 22 GOVERNOR NOEM: Thank you. 23 SENATOR JOHNSON: ... for your 24 willingness to serve. You'll be taking over a 25 massive federal government agency, 240,000</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 82</p>	<p>1 been a big topic of conversation in most of the 2 meetings that I've had with the members of this 3 committee was how do we fix this agency which the 4 reputation is that it's broken and dysfunctional. 5 I think that was the question I get asked the 6 most is why would you want to head up such a 7 dysfunctional department? And I would say that 8 because the mission of the department is to 9 secure the homeland and our people, it's our 10 biggest vulnerability right now, and we have a 11 president that's not enforcing the law, and I 12 don't believe the law should be unequally 13 applied. Everyone should be subject to our laws, 14 and a nation without laws and without borders is 15 not a nation at all. So, I will work by ensuring 16 one of the things that Senator Ernst talked 17 about, people have to show up for work. 18 I think there's going to be a majority 19 of people who don't have their primary mission to 20 secure the homeland, that if they don't want to 21 show up for work, then maybe they're just not 22 truly passionate about protecting America. I 23 think they need to do that, and they need to 24 recognize what their job is. The morale in DHS 25 is very low. I'm going to let people do their</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 84</p>
<p>1 employees. It's probably too massive. I think 2 had I been there back then, I don't think I 3 would've assembled these 22 different agencies in 4 this massive department, but that's what we've 5 got. It's a department that the previous 6 administration, I think, has completely misused. 7 Instead of using customs and border protection to 8 do that, to protect our border and secure it, 9 they've utilized those resources to incentivize a 10 massive influx of illegal immigration. Instead 11 of using the Cybersecurity Infrastructure 12 Security Agency to do that, they instead engage 13 in mission creep and utilized it to censor 14 Americans with the misinformation board. I am 15 concerned about disaster relief, just federal 16 disaster relief in general, creating greater and 17 greater and increasing levels of moral hazard 18 resulting in higher costs of these disasters. 19 So, let's cover each one of those kind of in 20 order. How do you gain control over a massive 21 agency whose resources and personnel have been 22 misused? I mean, how do you root out those 23 individuals who instead of securing our border 24 opened it up and facilitated this? 25 GOVERNOR NOEM: Well, Senator, this has</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 83</p>	<p>1 jobs. I'm going to remind them what their jobs 2 are. Some of these border patrol agents haven't 3 been able to do their jobs for a very long time. 4 They've been processing paperwork and 5 facilitating an invasion when they should be back 6 securing our border, which is why they were 7 recruited and wanted to serve there to begin 8 with. 9 We're going to build partnerships with 10 local law enforcement, with ICE and task forces. 11 So, we're communicating again with local sheriffs 12 and mayors and law enforcement to partner 13 together. When you talk about the fact that this 14 is such a broken agency that needs so much 15 improvement, a lot of it goes back to why we're 16 recreated and are we fulfilling that mission and 17 making sure that these individuals are getting 18 back on task. 19 SENATOR JOHNSON: So, under my 20 Chairmanship and under the Trump Administration, 21 we did rename a part of DHS, so the Cybersecurity 22 Information Security Agency. I in no way, shape 23 or form ever contemplated that the sub-agency 24 within DHS that was really focused on securing us 25 against the cyber threats and other threats to</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 85</p>

<p>1 our infrastructure would ever be used to violate 2 the Constitution the way it was used to violate 3 the Constitution under the Biden Administration. 4 This administration's been completely opaque. We 5 do not have the information to know and the 6 communication in terms of what all happened here. 7 So, my question is relates to how they misused 8 CISA. Will you commit to providing the 9 transparency, providing the information, 10 investigate it yourself, but provide this 11 committee, my subcommittee, the information to 12 expose the truth of the American public, but even 13 more importantly, propose a piece of legislation 14 based on our investigation, based on those 15 results to fix it so that no administration can 16 ever misuse the language of the law to commit 17 that kind of unconstitutional act and violate 18 people's First Amendment rights? 19 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yeah, Senator, I look 20 forward to working with you on that. And I think 21 what we saw during the COVID pandemic, the 22 actions of CISA, their misinformation and 23 disinformation campaign, the materials they were 24 putting out was shocking. Shocking at what they 25 were doing to decide what was truth, what wasn't,</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 86</p>	<p>1 their lives, the hundreds of billions of dollars' 2 worth of property damage. It's not just 3 California though. I mean, again, that was 4 grotesque mismanagement, that could have been 5 prevented. You can't prevent a hurricane, you 6 can't prevent floods, but you certainly can try 7 and start reducing the moral hazard that we've 8 allowed to explode, quite honestly, by the 9 federal government rushing in immediately, no 10 questions asked, just tell us how big a check you 11 want. What can you do in your new role to try 12 and start reducing over time the moral hazard 13 that we have created in this country with federal 14 disaster relief? 15 GOVERNOR NOEM: Well, Senator 16 emergencies and disasters are always locally led. 17 They're led by the local communities and leaders, 18 and that's because they're much more responsive 19 and much better informed on how to bring relief 20 and to get those emergency services there to meet 21 the need. Then it's state supported and 22 federally resourced, which means that when we 23 come in that we're supporting what the mission 24 is, what those emergency operations and plans 25 are, that the local city and county, and then</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 88</p>
<p>1 and how they were trying to manipulate the 2 American people. We saw it in elections and 3 Russia influence as well, and so ensuring that 4 they can't do that in the future under any 5 administration would be a priority, that they 6 stay doing what they're supposed to do and 7 hardening our systems and working with local 8 officials to do that is a priority, and I'd look 9 forward to working with you on legislation should 10 you wish to rein them in. 11 SENATOR JOHNSON: So, the first step in 12 that process is to expose the truth to find out 13 who these backed actors were, expose who they 14 were, hold them accountable. 15 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yes. 16 SENATOR JOHNSON: I mean, that is 17 crucial that we take that first step. So, again, 18 look forward to working with you on that. The 19 tragedy of the California fires, the more we 20 learn, the more we understand that not only was 21 it predictable, it was predicted, which means it 22 was preventable. Again, you can't prevent the 23 initiation of those fires, but you certainly 24 prevent them from raging into the tragedy that 25 they became, the dozens of people who've lost</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 87</p>	<p>1 also the state has implemented and do what we can 2 to fulfill the mission of our programs. 3 One of the things that FEMA's not doing 4 today that I think we should be doing is 5 streamlining communications. We saw this in New 6 Orleans, we saw it in other terrorist attacks in 7 the country, and you just referenced it as well 8 about the American people not getting the truth, 9 Senators not getting the truth and the 10 transparency that we need is that I believe FEMA 11 can always put out a blueprint for what a 12 response would be should something terrible 13 happen. 14 And when we look at the Secret Service, 15 what happened in Butler, we saw that 16 communication was an issue, that the Secret 17 Service wasn't communicating, and balls were 18 getting dropped with local authorities, local law 19 enforcement, and we can put forward a blueprint 20 for how communication can happen and be 21 streamlined between the federal government, the 22 state, and the local entities. So, that should 23 something happen, this is how we talk to each 24 other, to make sure that the public has the 25 facts, they're not getting misinformation, which</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 89</p>

<p>1 happened with the New Orleans terror attack just 2 recently, but also up in Pennsylvania as well. 3 That blueprint is what we do at the 4 state level that FEMA has failed to do, to 5 proactively educate the public on what 6 everybody's roles are, what we do should 7 something happen, whether it be a natural 8 disaster or a terrorist attack or an emergency 9 response is needed, that we can put out those 10 blueprints ahead of time, educate people, train 11 those local entities, which they currently do to 12 a certain extent today, but not good enough to 13 really know that not only can the resources be 14 pre-deployed in many of these situations so that 15 they're more readily accessible, but also how are 16 we going to communicate and make sure everybody's 17 on the same page so that we can be much more 18 efficient. 19 I wish that we would've had different 20 leadership and a different governor in 21 California, or we might have a different result 22 there. But in the Department of Homeland 23 Security, we can do all that we can to make sure 24 that the people that live in California know that 25 they're going to get a response from the federal</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 90</p>	<p>1 SENATOR GALLEGO: Thank you, Chairman. 2 Thank you, Governor, for your attendance and I 3 appreciate us meeting last week and our frank 4 conversation. So, following up to our 5 conversation, in recent years, I've been in very 6 close contact with our Arizona border 7 communities, which are unlike other border 8 communities and about the funding needs to 9 address migrant influxes through the shelter and 10 services program or SSP. Without this funding 11 border communities must bear all the financial 12 burden for national immigration challenges and 13 the broken border in general. So, that means 14 police, fire, hospital systems in general, 15 anything of that. And at the same time, they'll 16 also face the potential challenges of street 17 releases. And again, these are very small towns 18 on the border, so having thousands of people 19 being released becomes both burdensome security 20 issues and just not fair to them. And we get 21 lumped in with places like New York and Chicago 22 about how they do their shelter programs. 23 Our shelter programs are not the same 24 as New York and Chicago. We do not permanently 25 put people in apartments or anything of that</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 92</p>
<p>1 government that's appropriate, and we did all 2 that we could to make sure that they had the 3 information ahead of time so they could protect 4 themselves when they do have a failure in 5 leadership like we've seen. 6 SENATOR JOHNSON: Thank you and good 7 luck. 8 GOVERNOR NOEM: You bet. 9 SENATOR PAUL: Since Senator Johnson 10 brought up California fires, I have to interject 11 here. We talked about burn policies, these are 12 local policies, how we try to not have so much 13 brush and things like that. They're also next to 14 the largest body of water in the world, the 15 Pacific Ocean. So, I see these homes all burning 16 on the beach in Malibu, and I'm like, "Wow, if 17 they just had a generator and a hose, you start 18 sucking the water out of the Pacific Ocean." But 19 you could do more than that. You could pump it 20 and put it in cisterns up in the hills a mile or 21 two in. It doesn't rain very much there, but why 22 don't they take the ocean water, put it in 23 cisterns and have a bunch of water ready when a 24 wildfire shows up, but it's like once again, bad 25 local government. Senator Gallego.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 91</p>	<p>1 nature. We are trying to move people away from 2 the border so that way they don't become a burden 3 on these very, very small communities. So, I'm 4 very highly concerned, as I told you in our 5 meeting when the SSP program becomes politicized 6 and to the point where we get lumped in with 7 those programs, I don't think are effective and 8 are actually counterproductive and it ends up 9 depriving our small Arizona borders of these 10 very, very vital funds that they need. So, as 11 DHS Secretary, how would you ensure that border 12 communities are not left to respond to and pay 13 for these immigration influxes, the broken border 14 system on their own? And when you commit to 15 helping really not politicize or just join the 16 SSP program to the point where places that are 17 doing things correctly like Yuma, Arizona, like 18 Pima County, like Cochise County, aren't lumped 19 in with the people that are doing things 20 incorrectly like New York State and Chicago. 21 GOVERNOR NOEM: Well, Senator, thank 22 you for the conversation in your office about the 23 program, FEMA, the southern border, and the 24 challenges and then also the difference between 25 your state and how you utilize funds versus other</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 93</p>

<p>1 states. I would say that, my hope is that if 2 given the opportunity to serve as secretary, that 3 the federal government would no longer, and I 4 believe as President Trump has promised the 5 American people facilitate an illegal alien 6 invasion and that your communities in Arizona 7 would no longer have the issue with having people 8 in your small towns and communities that you need 9 to figure out how to take care of and get them to 10 where they want to go in other places of the 11 country.</p> <p>12 The President has promised he will 13 secure the border that we will uphold our 14 nation's laws and that he will do that to the 15 benefit and be putting America first again. So, 16 I know we talked extensively about the SSP 17 program and how you've utilized it, but getting 18 these programs back to what they were intended is 19 important to FEMA as a disaster response agency, 20 and some of the facilities that have been 21 utilizing these types of funds and dollars need 22 to be reevaluated and to make sure that it's 23 truly doing the service that is upholding our 24 nation's laws.</p> <p>25 SENATOR GALLEGOS: And certainly, I</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 94</p>	<p>1 think the mistakes that other states have taken 2 on. Moving on, in Arizona, we have large parts 3 of the board, they run through tribal lands. We 4 have 22 federally recognized tribes. We have 5 great relationships with these tribes. They want 6 to be collaborative partners when it comes to 7 border security. And then we have some great 8 programs that have worked in the past. For 9 example, the Shadow Wolves Program with the 10 Tohono O'odham Nation is a really good example, 11 collaborative program of tribal law enforcement 12 that worked with DHS to make sure they stop human 13 smuggling and cartels going through the borders. 14 But as DHS Secretary, what is your plan to 15 consult with our border tribes and work together 16 to balance both national security but also their 17 sovereignty?</p> <p>18 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yeah. Well, Senator, I 19 believe that my experience as governor and my 20 relationship with working with our tribes is 21 going to be an incredible powerful tool for me to 22 bring to bear at the Department of Homeland 23 Security to work on how we secure our southern 24 border but still respect their sovereignty and 25 still be able to work with them. This year, when</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 96</p>
<p>1 understand reevaluating especially how some of 2 these states have been using it and in an ideal 3 world, we don't have to have a program like that 4 because we don't have this mass of humanity 5 that's coming towards our borders, but even under 6 the first Trump administration, we actually still 7 needed it also. So, this is why my concern is to 8 not get rid of this program because again, these 9 small communities, I'm talking communities of 10 maybe 10,000 people, maybe only six or seven cops 11 are going to end up really bearing the brunt and 12 we are not a big state. We can't really 13 compensate for these types of losses. These 14 small communities are also largely, you come from 15 a rural state, counties that are largely rural 16 and with a lot of federal land so that actually 17 don't even have a tax base.</p> <p>18 So, when the broken immigration system 19 sends people to these borders and these 20 communities don't have enough money to pay for 21 cops, firefighters over time for hospital 22 systems, it's that type of program that keeps 23 these small communities afloat. So, just want to 24 make sure that again, this doesn't not become 25 politicized and that we are kept separate from I</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 95</p>	<p>1 looking at public safety issues that we had in 2 South Dakota and their lack of ability to hire 3 tribal officers on our reservations in South 4 Dakota, I offered to train federal law 5 enforcement officers, BIA officers, but also 6 their tribal police in South Dakota at no cost to 7 our tribes. And it's been an incredible powerful 8 tool that we've had to build relationships. 9 Those tribal police had the chance to go through 10 academy with the local maybe deputies from the 11 counties and the state highway patrol troopers 12 that were coming on board, and those 13 relationships have built partnerships in our 14 state that we didn't have before.</p> <p>15 The Shadow Wolf training opportunity is 16 incredible. That was down in Arizona that you 17 spoke of too, and in looking into that program, 18 I'd like to continue to build on that and 19 perpetuate in the future so that our tribes have 20 an opportunity to have a secure border but also 21 have it reflect their values and their culture 22 and have their own people be a part of the 23 solution and then even when it comes to the 24 infrastructure of the wall that we're respecting 25 that and their landscapes and their land as well.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 97</p>

<p>1 So, I look forward to working with you as we move 2 into this next administration to be able to 3 protect our country and then work and respect our 4 tribes as we do so.</p> <p>5 SENATOR GALLEG0: Thank you. And the 6 President Trump and some of his other potential 7 staff and advisors have been very vocal about 8 implementing a mass deportation strategy, talking 9 to my agricultural community, my dairy community, 10 they have concerns that this approach will lead 11 to workforce shortages that will further drive up 12 the costs of everything and something that we 13 have really been working hard to cross, I think a 14 bipartisan and a bipartisan manner to bring down 15 the costs of everything and unfortunately this 16 would reignite inflation. What is your plan to 17 ensure safe and legal immigration processes for 18 agricultural workers while protecting local 19 agricultural operations, including those both of 20 our home states?</p> <p>21 GOVERNOR NOEM: Well, Senator, the 22 President and President Trump has been very clear 23 that his priority is going to be deporting 24 criminals, those who have broken our laws and 25 perpetuated violence in our communities. That'll</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 98</p>	<p>1 ago today, we met in probably the coldest day 2 I've ever been in my life in Iowa --</p> <p>3 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yeah, that's true.</p> <p>4 SENATOR MORENO: ... as you and I were 5 making phone calls and whipping up votes for 6 Republicans in Iowa, my wife Bridget, who's here, 7 got a chance to meet you and we left Iowa saying, 8 "That person's really going to go far," and here 9 we are nine years later, you've been an amazing 10 governor, amazing Congresswoman, and now you're 11 going to make an even better Secretary of the 12 Department of Homeland Security. So, I think 13 sometimes in D.C. we tend to complicate things. 14 There is a current Secretary of Homeland 15 Security, so why don't we take this opportunity 16 to do a little job review and compare and 17 contrast him to you. So, if you don't mind, I'll 18 ask you some questions and you can give me an 19 answer. Secretary Mayorkas allowed about, you 20 said it, just about 400 people on the terror 21 watch list to come into this country legally. If 22 you were confirmed as Secretary of Homeland 23 Security, how many people on the terror watch 24 list would you allow into this country?</p> <p>25 GOVERNOR NOEM: Well, Senator, we would</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 100</p>
<p>1 be the priority. And as I spoke earlier with our 2 statistics, having over 425,000 of those with 3 criminal convictions in our country, that will be 4 a focus that we need to tackle right away, and 5 it'll be a big one. Beyond that, his next 6 priority is going to be those with final removal 7 orders and focus on those individuals who have 8 long overstayed and that there is a consequence 9 for ignoring our federal laws. Beyond that, 10 we'll continue conversations. As you know, I'm a 11 farmer and a rancher and come from an 12 agricultural state and we'll work together to 13 make sure that laws are followed. It is the 14 Senate and the house that puts forward the laws. 15 I as secretary uphold the law, so you determine 16 what that is and debate and discussion. I'll be 17 transparent and share as much information and 18 insight as I have with my background and 19 experience and continue to work with you.</p> <p>20 SENATOR GALLEG0: (Indiscernible).</p> <p>21 SENATOR PAUL: Senator Moreno.</p> <p>22 SENATOR MORENO: First of all, thank 23 you, Governor, for being here for testifying 24 before this committee and for your service, not 25 just to your state but to America. Nine years</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 99</p>	<p>1 work every single day until that number was zero. 2 And if you look at the previous Trump 3 administration over his entire four years in 4 comparison to Joe Biden's number President Trump, 5 it was 11 that were then removed from the country 6 and faced consequences. When you look at the 382 7 that Joe Biden has let in and the policies 8 continue, is shocking and needs to be changed 9 immediately.</p> <p>10 SENATOR MORENO: Mayorkas let in about 11 12,000 murderers, how many would you target to 12 let into this country?</p> <p>13 GOVERNOR NOEM: My goal every day would 14 be to have no murderers allowed into this country 15 and our communities.</p> <p>16 SENATOR MORENO: Mayorkas allowed 17 16,000 rapists, how many would you target to let 18 in?</p> <p>19 GOVERNOR NOEM: Every day I'd work to 20 make sure that there was none let into this 21 country.</p> <p>22 SENATOR MORENO: He let 600,000 -- 23 Mayorkas, 600,000, people with criminal 24 convictions, how many would you allow in?</p> <p>25 GOVERNOR NOEM: We would work every day</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 101</p>

<p>1 to make sure people are safe and that those with 2 criminal convictions are immediately removed.</p> <p>3 SENATOR MORENO: How many private jets 4 would you have the United States taxpayers have 5 fly into foreign countries to pick up people to 6 bring them here.</p> <p>7 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yeah. Senator, we will 8 no longer be undertaking that mission at the 9 Department of Homeland Security.</p> <p>10 SENATOR MORENO: So, not 700,000 11 individuals on private jets over the last four 12 years, you would not have any?</p> <p>13 GOVERNOR NOEM: No. I'll be working 14 with President Trump to put in place his agenda 15 and adherence to our federal laws.</p> <p>16 SENATOR MORENO: And how many illegals 17 will you plan to house in luxury hotel rooms in 18 Manhattan at a cost of \$6, 000 per month?</p> <p>19 GOVERNOR NOEM: Sir, clearly, Senator, 20 during this election, the American people said 21 they did not support that and that that would not 22 be a part of this new administration.</p> <p>23 SENATOR MORENO: How about sex change 24 operations for illegals, how many of those would 25 you suspect you would fund?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 102</p>	<p>1 GOVERNOR NOEM: Oh, Senator, my hope is 2 that that would be true. Yes.</p> <p>3 SENATOR MORENO: Let's switch to 4 another part of the disgraceful immigration laws 5 that Biden and Mayorkas, who objectively, by the 6 way, objectively, has been the worst cabinet 7 member ever in the history of the United States 8 of America. Let's talk about temporary 9 protective status. Temporary being the operative 10 word. Mayorkas and Biden just extended temporary 11 protective status again through 2027. Will you 12 continue to corrupt TPS to allow some sort of 13 open borders agenda and will you use hot weather 14 of 80 degrees and sunny beaches in El Salvador as 15 a reason why people have to stay in America and 16 not safely return?</p> <p>17 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yeah, Senator, this 18 program has been abused and manipulated by the 19 Biden administration and that will no longer be 20 allowed to allow that and these extensions going 21 forward the way that they are, the program was 22 intended to be temporary and this extension of 23 over 600,000 Venezuelans as well is alarming when 24 you look at what we've seen in different states, 25 including Colorado with gangs doing damage and</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 104</p>
<p>1 GOVERNOR NOEM: Senator, I believe that 2 the Department of Homeland Security will be 3 reevaluating its mission in this country to not 4 allow that going forward under President Trump's 5 goals.</p> <p>6 SENATOR MORENO: And if you had any 7 legal migrant that was in this country and they 8 committed a crime, would you offer them airfare 9 from one state to another to evade law 10 enforcement?</p> <p>11 GOVERNOR NOEM: Sir, I will be 12 following this nation's laws and the Constitution 13 and make sure that all laws are adhered to.</p> <p>14 SENATOR MORENO: And if you had been 15 the head of the Department of Homeland Security a 16 year or so ago, would you have closed a detention 17 center in Georgia that would've allowed the 18 release of somebody charged with a crime?</p> <p>19 GOVERNOR NOEM: Sir, I don't have the 20 specifics to that situation, but certainly that 21 would not be something that I would want to have 22 under my watch.</p> <p>23 SENATOR MORENO: So, just to be clear, 24 Laken Riley would be alive today if you had been 25 the Secretary of Homeland Security?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 103</p>	<p>1 harming the individuals and the people that live 2 there.</p> <p>3 SENATOR MORENO: And in terms of our 4 border, like the physical border, I've been there 5 many times. You've been there many times. Who 6 should be in charge? Who should have operational 7 control of our border? The United States 8 government or the Mexican drug cartels?</p> <p>9 GOVERNOR NOEM: Oh, Senator, the United 10 States needs to control our borders and secure 11 them.</p> <p>12 SENATOR MORENO: So, if this were a job 13 interview in the private sector and you had 14 somebody like Alejandro Mayorkas in charge and we 15 had the opportunity to upgrade to you, this would 16 be the greatest upgrade in history of the United 17 States of America. But I'm going to end my time 18 with a startling statistic and actually a 19 challenge to the Democrat party. When Mayorkas 20 was confirmed, every single Democrat voted to 21 confirm him, and six Republicans joined all 50 22 Democrats in that confirmation. If we get to the 23 vote, and hopefully Chairman, we could do that 24 Monday, because we cannot wait one single day 25 without you being in charge of that department.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 105</p>

<p>1 We should have 100 percent; 100 Senators vote for 2 your confirmation.</p> <p>3 This will be the litmus test in my mind 4 as to whether we have a Democrat party that's 5 actually serious about doing bipartisan things 6 like securing this country and protecting our 7 citizens. Any Democrat that voted for Mayorkas 8 that does not vote for you should be in front of 9 their voters and removed from office. Thank you 10 for serving, Brian. Thank you for being here, 11 for putting up with the nonsense that you guys 12 have had to put up with over the years. You are 13 going to make an amazing Secretary of Homeland 14 Security. Thank you for being here.</p> <p>15 GOVERNOR NOEM: Thank you, Senator.</p> <p>16 SENATOR PAUL: Senator Slotkin.</p> <p>17 SENATOR SLOTKIN: Thanks for being here 18 and thanks for our time in my office, Governor. 19 I'm a former CIA officer, joined right after 9/11 20 and served three tours in Iraq alongside the 21 military. I'm actually the first CIA officer in 22 the Senate and to me the most important thing 23 again as a Democrat from a state that Trump won, 24 right, on the same ballot we both won. I 25 understand we're going to have different policy</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 106</p>	<p>1 very elite military unit. I mean, it's horrible. 2 It's one of the hardest things to catch the sort 3 of lone wolf, radicalized American citizen, but I 4 want to protect ourselves. Our most recent 5 examples of domestic terrorism we're not what 6 we've spent the majority talking about today, 7 crime from a migrant, and I don't dispute there 8 is crime, but I just want to know and I want to 9 hear from you as an intelligence officer that 10 you're going to speak about real threats and not 11 blow something up, politicize something, make 12 something more exciting because that's maybe what 13 the President wants to hear, but your mission to 14 protect and defend the Constitution means calling 15 honestly what the threats are to the country. 16 Can you just give me a yes or no, please?</p> <p>17 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yes, Senator. I will 18 be as transparent and factual every day with you 19 and the American people as possible based on the 20 information that I have. I don't know if the 21 investigations are closed in New Orleans and in 22 Nevada, but what we know so far and needs to be 23 relayed to the American people, needs to be the 24 truth and facts.</p> <p>25 SENATOR SLOTKIN: Yeah, I'd ask that.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 108</p>
<p>1 opinions. I certainly understand that the 2 President or incoming President has the right to 3 nominate whoever he wants. Those are not the 4 issues for me that I'm going to spend my time on. 5 The ones that I care about the most relate to the 6 mission of the organization when it was founded, 7 protecting the homeland, and I think to me, it's 8 one thing when there's campaign rhetoric or 9 political politicization of things, everyone does 10 that on both sides of the aisle in this committee 11 and in our line of work, but when it comes to 12 actually protecting the country, you do have to 13 be clear and honest about facts and not conflate 14 things.</p> <p>15 So, it's just important to me that I 16 know, particularly since you do have one of the 17 intelligence agencies within the Department of 18 Homeland Security, that you're going to call a 19 spade a spade, right? The most recent acts of 20 domestic terrorism in New Orleans, horrible 21 incident in Nevada had nothing to do with 22 migrants. Correct?</p> <p>23 GOVERNOR NOEM: Correct.</p> <p>24 SENATOR SLOTKIN: They were homegrown 25 American citizens. One of them was actually in a</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 107</p>	<p>1 We've talked a lot about border security. As a 2 CIA officer, I think one of the only people on 3 this committee who's actually worked on 4 protecting the homeland. I'm a Middle East 5 terrorism and militia expert by training, so I 6 believe deeply in it and every country of the 7 world gets to decide who comes inside its 8 borders. That's not a radical concept, but I 9 think I've been open with this committee that it 10 is also on us to fix the deeply broken legal 11 immigration system. I'm glad to hear that you're 12 going to carry out the laws on the immigration 13 system. Democrats and Republicans are to blame 14 that we haven't fixed this system, but I also 15 believe you can't fully control the border unless 16 you give people that we need for our companies, 17 for our economy a legal vetted way to come here. 18 So, do you believe in legal vetted immigration 19 and that we need more of it in the United States?</p> <p>20 GOVERNOR NOEM: I do believe we need to 21 follow our legal immigration laws and that it 22 needs to be vetted. We need more resources, I 23 believe in some of the elements of this to ensure 24 that we're --</p> <p>25 SENATOR SLOTKIN: Do you believe that</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 109</p>

<p>1 our economy depends and needs some level, just 2 like your family came from Norway and on economic 3 drive and wanted a better life -- 4 GOVERNOR NOEM: Well, immigration's 5 always been a part of our history and will be a 6 part of our future. We just need to make sure 7 that we're adhering to our nation's laws, which 8 this body has the ability to -- 9 SENATOR SLOTKIN: I'm with you, I'm 10 with you. 11 GOVERNOR NOEM: ... continue to change 12 and to put in place. 13 SENATOR SLOTKIN: Again, going back to 14 the fact that you will pledge an oath to the 15 Constitution, not to President Trump. Just like 16 every other nominee, President Trump said in 17 November that he's willing to use law 18 enforcement, National Guard, or even active-duty 19 military to go after the threat from within the 20 United States. I don't know exactly what he was 21 talking about, but we have recent examples from 22 your predecessors at DHS where federal law 23 enforcement were sent into a state, in this case 24 Oregon without coordination with the governor. 25 Those federal law enforcement officers at the</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 110</p>	<p>1 SENATOR SLOTKIN: I just to know you're 2 a former governor, you can imagine that if Joe 3 Biden sent in 700 federal law enforcement under 4 Secretary Mayorkas without coordinating with you, 5 I think we can agree you'd be a little upset. 6 So, I just ask that you give the same respect for 7 coordination and that we are very sensitive. 8 People are worried about politicizing of law 9 enforcement and the uniformed military. That's a 10 bad thing. I hope we can agree. Lastly, I will 11 just say, look forward to looking at the northern 12 border, the Gordie Howe Bridge, your help 13 staffing that. We know you are right now across 14 many administrations, we haven't met our staffing 15 goals at DHS and that's a problem, so we really 16 want to make sure that opens on time. 17 But I also want your assurances. You 18 received FEMA assistance from Joe Biden's 19 administration, right? You had historic floods. 20 You asked and requested of the administration, 21 and you were given millions of dollars to help 22 with that. I understand you don't like Gavin 23 Newsom, but can you say in front of the American 24 people that you will open the books to this 25 committee who does have oversight over FEMA, that</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 112</p>
<p>1 time were putting down threats to federal 2 buildings and they were legitimate threats. I 3 don't dispute, there was destruction of property 4 going on during a bunch of protests and riots, so 5 I don't dispute that. But they weren't wearing 6 insignia. We talked about this. They weren't 7 wearing any markings, so people were arrested by 8 folks in fatigues with no names, no idea who they 9 were, like right out of a bad Hollywood movie. 10 Okay. If the President asks you to send in 11 federal law enforcement to a state without 12 coordination of that, Governor, would you support 13 that action? 14 GOVERNOR NOEM: Senator, my job, if 15 nominated, and sworn in as Secretary of Homeland 16 Security, is to uphold the Constitution and to 17 uphold -- 18 SENATOR SLOTKIN: So, you will push 19 back -- 20 GOVERNOR NOEM: ... the rules of this 21 country. Yes, that will be the oath and the 22 pledge that I will be making. And my goal also 23 is to work with you to ensure that we have 24 situations that are always appropriate, that we 25 are well-defined on who we are --</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 111</p>	<p>1 you will open the books in a bipartisan way to 2 ensure whether it's North Carolina or California 3 or anywhere in between, that the American people 4 can know that you are not playing politics with 5 disaster assistance? 6 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yes. Senator, I'll 7 work with you in this committee to make sure I'm 8 following the federal law and ensuring that you 9 have information and transparency from us and 10 from DHS and FEMA. 11 SENATOR SLOTKIN: Thank you. 12 Appreciate it. Yield back. 13 SENATOR PAUL: Senator Lankford. 14 SENATOR LANKFORD: Governor Noem, great 15 to see you. 16 GOVERNOR NOEM: Great to see you too. 17 SENATOR LANKFORD: Thanks for being 18 here. Thanks for accepting this nod that the 19 President has given you. For, Brian, thanks. 20 Both of you, you've walked through a lot. I have 21 had the privilege of knowing you for a very long 22 time since we served together in the House of 23 Representatives, so I have the benefit of knowing 24 your qualifications and how strong you are in all 25 these background issues and how hard you work on</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 113</p>

<p>1 these things because I've seen it firsthand. So, 2 I appreciate you stepping into this because a lot 3 of attention across the country will be focused 4 on this. You know that full well and you've 5 stepped into it. For Governor Landry, my state 6 and many folks in my state are praying for you 7 and for your state. You've done a great job in 8 leadership at this moment in a very, very tough 9 time for Louisiana, and we don't want to see acts 10 of terrorism anywhere in our country and it's 11 incredibly difficult days for a governor, so 12 thanks for your leadership on that as well. I 13 also have to tell you, Kristi, I've whined to my 14 wife occasionally about the temperature that's 15 coming on Monday. I'm very excited about Trump's 16 inaugural, but we're all going to be sitting 17 outside in about 12 degrees. And I thought just 18 for fun, I would check South Dakota on Monday, 19 it's one, for a high, for a high. 20 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yeah, for a high. 21 SENATOR LANKFORD: And so, I'm going to 22 stop whining about the temperature Monday here in 23 Washington, D.C. on it. Look, I'm going to run 24 through a couple of things here because I know 25 you, not everybody in Oklahoma knows you. The</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 114</p>	<p>1 One app? 2 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yes, Senator. We will 3 eliminate the CBP One app, maintain some of the 4 data that's in it that's critical to knowing 5 who's in our country, but that app will no longer 6 be in use. 7 SENATOR LANKFORD: Thank you. No other 8 President has ever used the parole authority, 9 just in general, humanitarian parole to 10 facilitate faster processing of aliens into our 11 country, which leads to the catch and release 12 we've all heard about. So, the Oklahomans that I 13 talked to say, "Are we about to end the abuse of 14 parole and end catch and release? Is that about 15 to stop?" 16 GOVERNOR NOEM: Senator, President 17 Trump's been very clear that he will end catch 18 and release. 19 SENATOR LANKFORD: Terrific. Folks 20 want to know, will you use your authority with 21 the funds that are given to you by Congress to 22 actually build more wall rather than use the 23 funding that's given to you as the Biden 24 administration did to do environmental 25 remediation around the border rather than actual</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 116</p>
<p>1 questions that I get from people though in 2 Oklahoma, I want to be able to run past you 3 because they want to be able to know the answer 4 to these things, so I'm just going to blitz 5 through a whole bunch of them. Will you use the 6 legal authority that DHS already has to be able 7 to close our border? 8 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yes, Senator. I will 9 work with President Trump to ensure that we're 10 securing our border. 11 SENATOR LANKFORD: Thank you. There's 12 a lot of things that this Congress needs to do, 13 has already been mentioned by Senator Slotkin as 14 well, that we need you to be able to close 15 loopholes to be able to give you additional 16 authority, but there's a tremendous amount of 17 authority currently not being used in Oklahoma, 18 as you're saying, is that about to be used? And 19 they'll be grateful to be able to hear that. No 20 other President has ever created a phone app to 21 be able to facilitate a faster processing of 22 aliens in, called the CBP One app. It's been 23 mentioned several times here. Will you use your 24 authority to stop facilitating faster processing 25 of illegal aliens into our country with the CBP</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 115</p>	<p>1 border wall and border structure? 2 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yeah. Senator, 3 President Trump has been clear that he wants to 4 build the wall. 5 SENATOR LANKFORD: So, do we. So, will 6 you use your authority to be able to scan more 7 vehicles and obviously we've got to get you the 8 funding to be able to do this, to be able to scan 9 more vehicles and individuals that are carrying 10 Fentanyl into our country through our ports of 11 entry. 12 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yes, Senator. We will 13 continue to use technologies but hopefully be 14 able to use more with the resources that were 15 granted to scan those vehicles and know what's 16 coming in and out of this country. 17 SENATOR LANKFORD: Last year, FEMA 18 employees during disaster relief were instructed 19 by one of their supervisors that if they see a 20 Trump sign or a Trump flag flying to skip that 21 house, to not stop by there and tell them what 22 their federal government can do for them. Will 23 you allow FEMA employees or any within DHS to 24 politicize their role and to pick and choose who 25 gets help and who doesn't as an American?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 117</p>

<p>1 GOVERNOR NOEM: Senator, under 2 President Trump's administration, disaster and 3 emergency relief will not be handed out with 4 political bias. Every American will be responded 5 to and treated equally.</p> <p>6 SENATOR LANKFORD: That's what folks 7 want to know. Will you review the Secret Service 8 responsibilities to be able to go back through it 9 and to say, are they focused on their primary 10 mission or is there something you could distract? 11 Secret Service still chases down financial 12 crimes, they're still chasing down child 13 exploitation. Those are serious things for 14 Treasury or for FBI to do, but there's a question 15 is if that's the first priority for Secret 16 Service?</p> <p>17 GOVERNOR NOEM: Senator, the Secret 18 Service is in need of dramatic reforms. They do 19 have a protective detail element that is their 20 priority and also an investigation side. My 21 understanding is that that investigation side is 22 often used to train the protective detailed 23 officers, but clearly, they are not focusing on 24 what their true duty is, and it needs to get back 25 onto what they were created for and that was the</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 118</p>	<p>1 that. Let me tell you another challenge we've 2 had with Homeland Security in the past four 3 years. When we ask for data and for information, 4 we get, "I'll get back to you on that." When we 5 ask again and again and again and again, we get 6 the same statement, "I'll get back to you on 7 that." Now, I can go down the street to the 8 command center, where they actually get the data 9 in live, and they have it up on big screens and 10 they're tracking exactly what's happening on the 11 southern border to the minute, but if I ask for 12 what happened last month, they'll say, "We're 13 still gathering that data." We're not asking for 14 anything other than what Congress is supposed to 15 get. That's the ability to be able to see data 16 and to have real oversight over DHS and that has 17 been a failure of this DHS along with multiple 18 other issues on that. When we request the data 19 for basic things like, how many special interest 20 aliens were allowed across the border.</p> <p>21 If it was last year, we had to find out 22 on our own. It was 70,000 people that were 23 targeted by this administration as a potential 24 national security risk that were not just found 25 at the border that were released when they were</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 120</p>
<p>1 protective detail, mission, and emergency 2 situations that they need to help plan and 3 prepare for and defend.</p> <p>4 SENATOR LANKFORD: Thank you. This 5 committee made a request to the Secretary of 6 Homeland Security last year, and by the way, also 7 the head of the FBI to be able to come before 8 this committee and to do what every Secretary of 9 Homeland Security has done for the last 20 years, 10 every single year, unbroken until last year. And 11 then the secretary refused to come before this 12 committee in an open session and talk about 13 national threats. Now, the former Chairman 14 protested strongly to the Biden administration 15 and DHS, they weren't coming, but they still 16 refused to be able to come. Will you come before 17 this committee and talk about the threats openly 18 so the American people can hear them in a public 19 forum?</p> <p>20 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yes. Senator, Senator 21 Peters, and I discussed this quite a bit in our 22 meeting as well, and I have committed to come and 23 give that briefing to this committee and to the 24 American people.</p> <p>25 SENATOR LANKFORD: Thank you. We need</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 119</p>	<p>1 found at the border. 70,000 people just from 2 last year in the country right now that this 3 administration declared at the border, they're a 4 potential national security risk. Now, I know 5 you're not going to do that, but when we ask for 6 the data and for the information, when we say, 7 "How's the National Vetting Center working?" Do 8 you have the connection to be able to screen 9 individuals there? We're just doing our 10 oversight responsibility. You've served in 11 Congress before and did a great job on that and 12 did oversight. We want to still be able to do 13 the same thing. Will you provide data to this 14 committee so that we can cooperate with you to 15 help?</p> <p>16 GOVERNOR NOEM: Senator, I will follow 17 the law and be transparent with you and allow you 18 to do the due diligence towards oversight that 19 you're tasked with.</p> <p>20 SENATOR LANKFORD: I have absolutely no 21 doubt about that, Governor. I have absolutely no 22 doubt, looking forward to you serving in that 23 role.</p> <p>24 GOVERNOR NOEM: Thank you.</p> <p>25 SENATOR LANKFORD: Thank you.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 121</p>

<p>1 GOVERNOR NOEM: Thank you.</p> <p>2 SENATOR PAUL: Well, congratulations,</p> <p>3 Governor Noem. You are almost done.</p> <p>4 GOVERNOR NOEM: Okay.</p> <p>5 SENATOR PAUL: We've been through a lot</p> <p>6 of questions. I think you've handled the</p> <p>7 questions very well and I'm ask a couple of</p> <p>8 questions, and I think the ranking member has a</p> <p>9 few and I think we'll be done very shortly. I</p> <p>10 think a lot of Americans, including some</p> <p>11 conservatives misunderstand the First Amendment.</p> <p>12 They think the First Amendment says that</p> <p>13 "Facebook has to publish my opinion," or, "The</p> <p>14 Wall Street Journal has to publish my opinion,"</p> <p>15 or "We need to force them to be fair." That's</p> <p>16 not what the First Amendment's about at all.</p> <p>17 The First Amendment really doesn't</p> <p>18 apply to telling private companies what we can or</p> <p>19 cannot say. YouTube censored me and I despise</p> <p>20 their policy. They actually took down speeches I</p> <p>21 made on the floor, but really, I don't have a</p> <p>22 legal recourse other than I can complain about</p> <p>23 YouTube being unfair and not hosting both sides</p> <p>24 of an issue. However, with the government</p> <p>25 though, there is a rule. The First Amendment</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 122</p>	<p>1 who said that the pushiness, the coerciveness of</p> <p>2 government meeting with them was unprecedented</p> <p>3 and that they pushed back. But he also said</p> <p>4 worse than them just sort of telling him he</p> <p>5 should restrict speech; they also threatened him.</p> <p>6 They threatened to come after him through</p> <p>7 antitrust law, they threatened to remove parts of</p> <p>8 Section 230 of the liability protection.</p> <p>9 Just to imagine this bully nature of</p> <p>10 government, and I know you're opposed to that,</p> <p>11 but if you're confirmed and you're in a position</p> <p>12 of saying, "We're just no longer sending people</p> <p>13 to meet with media," and the way I describe it is</p> <p>14 to talk about constitutionally protected speech.</p> <p>15 Because some will say, "Oh, well, what about</p> <p>16 pornography or what about child trafficking?"</p> <p>17 Those are illegal. Those are not</p> <p>18 constitutionally protected speech. You have</p> <p>19 every ability to meet with that. But for</p> <p>20 constitutionally protected speech, will you tell</p> <p>21 us in America that you will no longer be sending</p> <p>22 government agents to meet with the media?</p> <p>23 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yes, Senator. I'll</p> <p>24 work with you to ensure that civil rights and</p> <p>25 liberties are protected and that we are not in</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 124</p>
<p>1 specifically says, "Congress shall pass no law</p> <p>2 banning or abridging speech," and this is what</p> <p>3 really got us worried about what, not only the</p> <p>4 FBI was doing, but the Department of Homeland</p> <p>5 Security actually meeting with these companies.</p> <p>6 SENATOR PAUL: ... on a weekly basis.</p> <p>7 And imagine the chilling effect of this, imagine</p> <p>8 that there are cameras here, that they're going</p> <p>9 to end their filming of this interview and then</p> <p>10 decide, "Well, what she said or what he said</p> <p>11 really was misinformation, and we should edit</p> <p>12 that out." Can you imagine? It's just hard for</p> <p>13 me to imagine that the media has not, which once</p> <p>14 defended the First Amendment, hasn't been in more</p> <p>15 of an uproar over the government meeting with the</p> <p>16 media to decide things. Some of this we didn't</p> <p>17 know, and then Elon Musk bought Twitter. People</p> <p>18 asked him, they said, "Well, you've paid \$44</p> <p>19 billion for Twitter. Isn't that too much?" And</p> <p>20 he said, "I paid \$44 billion to defend free</p> <p>21 speech."</p> <p>22 And it's been an amazing service, not</p> <p>23 only to open up the forum to more viewpoints, but</p> <p>24 to point out what the government was doing. In</p> <p>25 this last week, we heard from Mark Zuckerberg,</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 123</p>	<p>1 the misinformation and disinformation space like</p> <p>2 the current DHS is.</p> <p>3 SENATOR PAUL: The only other thing I</p> <p>4 would ask on this basis is we will send requests,</p> <p>5 we sent requests previously, sometimes, and often</p> <p>6 bipartisan requests, for information. The</p> <p>7 Twitter files, Michael Schellenberger, Matt</p> <p>8 Taibbi, Bari Weiss did a great job of showing</p> <p>9 what was happening in Twitter and how they were</p> <p>10 cooperating with government. I think the other</p> <p>11 investigation that needs to occur is who are the</p> <p>12 people in government they were talking to? Do</p> <p>13 they still work at DHS, and can we make sure that</p> <p>14 they're not in a position of authority?</p> <p>15 And this is not something I'm going to</p> <p>16 tell you to do. It's just a request that you</p> <p>17 have your own investigation, that you have people</p> <p>18 who work for DHS to say, "We are going to look</p> <p>19 for people who are bringing their political bias</p> <p>20 to work and trying to influence speech and</p> <p>21 restrict speech based on their bias and help us</p> <p>22 in rooting that out and making sure that these</p> <p>23 people never again have that responsibility."</p> <p>24 Because I don't think there's ever been anything</p> <p>25 like this as far as the restriction of speech,</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 125</p>

<p>1 and I think the election is largely going to stop 2 and tilt things the other way. But will you help 3 us by looking internally for those who are trying 4 to restrict speech?</p> <p>5 GOVERNOR NOEM: Senator, I look forward 6 to working with you on that mission.</p> <p>7 SENATOR PAUL: I don't have any other 8 questions now, but I think Senator Peters and 9 Senator Blumenthal, and we'll see how it goes. 10 We're going to start with Senator Peters with one 11 more five-minute round.</p> <p>12 SENATOR PETERS: Yeah, I'll be fairly 13 brief. We've had opportunity to talk at length 14 about many issues, and again, I appreciate that, 15 Governor. I just want to stress going forward, 16 and we've heard a lot of comments here, I think 17 there's been a fair amount of political theater. 18 Not as much as I know exist in other committees, 19 and I've always strived, and I know ranking 20 member or now Chairman Paul share the notion that 21 we want to be a fact-based committee and try to 22 find tangible solutions to the tough problems 23 that we face, and data is important. We've heard 24 a lot of numbers being thrown around here, and I 25 don't have time to go through and challenge those</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 126</p>	<p>1 that spirit, I hope if confirmed that is exactly 2 what you will be bringing to this office, and 3 let's move away from this toxic political 4 environment that we have in the country and 5 celebrate what's great about our country in the 6 spirit of bringing the American people together.</p> <p>7 So, I have one question before we turn 8 it over to other members. As a member of this 9 committee, as well as the Armed Services 10 Committee, I've focused a great deal on the safe 11 integration of drones in our airspace while 12 addressing the growing threats that drones 13 possess. We certainly see what drones are doing 14 in changing the face of warfare, whether it's in 15 Ukraine and other battlefields around the world. 16 We are very concerned about the weaponization of 17 those drones and what it could mean to the 18 security here in the United States. I've 19 proposed comprehensive legislation to extend 20 authorities beyond just the FBI and DOJ and 21 Homeland Security to local law enforcement.</p> <p>22 You mentioned in your comments about 23 security for the Super Bowl, which is incredibly 24 important, but we have to remember that that 25 threat exists for all games. In fact, one of the</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 128</p>
<p>1 numbers. Some of them we don't even know where 2 they came from. I don't think that's helpful to 3 the very important mission of confirm that you're 4 going to be dealing with. So, I hope in the 5 future, that we're actually dealing with facts.</p> <p>6 You've mentioned many times that you do 7 want to deal with facts and real data. And 8 again, we heard a lot here that's not real data, 9 and we should not operate that way. And if 10 confirmed when we move forward, I'm going to look 11 forward to working with you based on the facts 12 and understand where the real threats are, how we 13 need to appropriate resources to make sure we're 14 meeting those threats.</p> <p>15 And let's take this hyper-partisanship 16 out of such an important issue of homeland 17 security. We have way too much partisanship in 18 this country, and it's resulted in a polarization 19 of people here. We've got to come together as 20 this country, we've got to lock arms and 21 understand that we're all proud Americans, we all 22 want to do what's best for the American people 23 and solve the issues that are before us.</p> <p>24 So, in that spirit, and certainly 25 you've communicated that spirit to me, but in</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 127</p>	<p>1 biggest supporters of my legislation is the NFL. 2 In fact, we just had a recent playoff game that 3 was delayed because of drones that flew into that 4 playoff game. We are very concerned that you 5 could have a drone with a grenade or an explosive 6 device, which would be absolutely catastrophic. 7 It's absolutely essential that we address this 8 threat. What we're seeing around the world and 9 what we're seeing in daily activities should be a 10 concern. I think this is just a matter of time. 11 It's not if, it's when, and we need to be on the 12 front end of that.</p> <p>13 And with that in mind, I want to remind 14 folks that Congress just recently extended 15 critical counter-UAS authority, counter-drone 16 authority only for a short-time basis for the 17 12th time. We only do these little, tiny short- 18 term extensions, and we aren't dealing with the 19 problem comprehensively as we should, and those 20 are going to expire on March 14th, a very short 21 time from now. And so, my question for you, 22 Governor, is if confirmed as DHS Secretary, will 23 you commit to working with me and my colleagues 24 to pass durable, long-term authorities that will 25 protect this country from what is a real threat,</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 129</p>

<p>1 and it's just a matter of time? And I don't want 2 to have a horrible incident occur, and people 3 wonder why we didn't take action beforehand. So, 4 please address that.</p> <p>5 GOVERNOR NOEM: Senator, I look forward 6 to working with you and this committee to address 7 the threats we may face and the usage of drones 8 in this country in relation to our national 9 security interests and our homeland security 10 interests. So, thank you for bringing up the 11 conversation today, because it is one of the 12 areas within DHS that we have a responsibility to 13 address in cooperation with Congress.</p> <p>14 SENATOR PETERS: And my first comments 15 on bringing people together, please comment on 16 that.</p> <p>17 GOVERNOR NOEM: Oh, well, thank you, 18 sir. Yes, no.</p> <p>19 SENATOR PETERS: I didn't ask that 20 question, but in my 24 seconds left.</p> <p>21 GOVERNOR NOEM: I'm looking forward to 22 working with everyone, Republicans and Democrats 23 and everyone else in between, that in this 24 country that is focused on keeping America safe 25 and secure for our future. I would just point,</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 130</p>	<p>1 GOVERNOR NOEM: Sure.</p> <p>2 SENATOR PETERS: So, it's data and 3 facts that we can all agree on that drive our 4 policy and not political theater. Would you 5 agree?</p> <p>6 GOVERNOR NOEM: Well, certainly, sir. 7 We need to be addressing facts and information 8 rather than political theater. We also need to 9 speak truth to facts. So, I think it's important 10 that we're willing to confront our challenges 11 head on and have those conversations. And you'll 12 see me back at your office door very soon to 13 continue our work together.</p> <p>14 SENATOR PETERS: Very good. Thank you.</p> <p>15 SENATOR PAUL: And I want to second 16 basically what Senator Peters has said. On 17 records requests, I've told him, and I plan on 18 it, it's going to be administration of my party, 19 that if he wants records and there are legitimate 20 records, we're going to sign requests together, 21 and we'd like to get the records. It also helps, 22 though, and I think Senator Lankford mentioned 23 this, is you ask a question, not you, but to the 24 administration or any administration, they're 25 like, "Oh, yeah. We'll get back to you on it."</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 132</p>
<p>1 Senator, to my background and my history. When I 2 came to Congress, I worked with Republicans and 3 Democrats on both sides of the aisle on many 4 pieces of legislation and was very happy to do so 5 and focus on priorities on where we could 6 agreement, knowing we may disagree on some 7 issues, but there was areas where we could keep 8 the federal government accountable and do due 9 diligence by the people that pay their taxes and 10 get up and go to work every single day. As 11 governor, as well. I was governor for every 12 single person in the state of South Dakota, and 13 they were my number one priority, and everyone 14 knew there that it didn't matter if you were 15 Republican or Democrat, that my focus was on them 16 and keeping our state thriving and free.</p> <p>17 So, I look forward to continuing the 18 work that I always have to be coming up with 19 solutions and in a bipartisan manner, and 20 hopefully, my visits to your office and 21 conversations reflected that and my intention on 22 how I would conduct the role as the Department of 23 Homeland Security Secretary.</p> <p>24 SENATOR PETERS: Got a brief follow up 25 to that.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 131</p>	<p>1 Many times, I've even asked in advance, and I 2 would suggest that we ask you in advance 3 together, we ask in advance, "If you're coming in 4 a month, we say we want this data. Be prepared 5 to talk about it." And if you are, you'll have 6 many more friends on both sides because what 7 usually happens, and that's why I don't like 8 springing the question. If it's a technical 9 question that needs data, we're going to tell you 10 in advance, at least I will, and we want you to 11 come prepared with that.</p> <p>12 And that goes a long way, because 13 really what happens is we get stiff-armed. They 14 say, "We'll get back to you," and we have no way 15 to force you, really, other than we could cut the 16 money off, and nobody ever does that. But you'll 17 have 200,000 people working for you. By 18 goodness, send your experts out, scour the 19 records. And it is true, facts are difficult, 20 and sometimes, there's different spins on the 21 same set of facts, but I think that will help.</p> <p>22 On the drones, I think we need more 23 facts. So, I'm more than willing to work with 24 the ranking member on doing something on drones, 25 but I don't want every sheriff out there shooting</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 133</p>

<p>1 up in the sky at stuff. We got to figure out and 2 we got to get the truth about do we really have 3 drones everywhere flying all the time? How many 4 of them are planes? How many of them are drones? 5 And let's go through this, and then let's figure 6 out, and then let's talk about how we bring 7 drones down. If we interrupt and collect a lot 8 of cellular signal through that, are we doing it 9 with a warrant? What are we going to do with all 10 the Americans' data that we've collected to take 11 down drones? If we have to take a whole cell 12 towers worth of data, there's a lot of innocent 13 people's data is going to be collected in that. 14 Is that being gotten rid of? So, I think there 15 are ways we can get to the right place. 16 Everybody, obviously nobody wants drones coming 17 down. 18 The only other thing I'd add on drones 19 before I turn it over to Senator Lankford is 20 look, I'm all for the NFL being protected and the 21 Super Bowl being protected. They need to pay. 22 They are a very rich organization. They want 23 drones flying over in New Orleans. I'm all for 24 it. The NFL ought to pay the government if the 25 government's doing it, or we ought to have</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 134</p>	<p>1 have felt like they've been sidelined, and 2 they've not been able to do their job that they 3 really signed up for. And what I'm hearing from 4 you is you're going to allow them to do their job 5 again, what has been historically true for a long 6 time, that federal law enforcement is there to 7 actually help protect the country and the 8 citizens and those communities, that you're going 9 to allow them to do that, and that's helpful. 10 So, I have two quick things that I want 11 to be able to mention on this. One is right now, 12 just in the structure of this, and we can talk 13 about this a different time, but CBP facilities 14 that are along the border are really run by a 15 different entity called GSA, and they're not 16 allowed to be able to do updates on their 17 facilities or to design their facilities. 18 Somebody who lives 3,000 miles away and who 19 doesn't actually do border patrol work, they 20 actually design and oversee their facilities. 21 That's a problem that we've got to be able to 22 fix. 23 So, we've worked to be able to give 24 more flexibility to CBP that when they have 25 difficulty and challenges there, they have the</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 136</p>
<p>1 private contractors doing it, but they shouldn't 2 just get it for free. Senator Lankford. 3 SENATOR LANKFORD: Thank you. Thanks, 4 again. As Senator Paul will remember on this, 5 there used to be a public facing website that all 6 Americans could actually get the data, what's 7 happening on the border, what's actually moving, 8 and then when the numbers got bad, that seemed to 9 disappear, and then we couldn't even get the data 10 anymore. So, I look forward to actually finding 11 ways to be able to have everybody has the ability 12 to be able to see some of this data as well on 13 it. 14 There's a reason that the DHS Secretary 15 is the very first week of nominations. This is a 16 really important role, and it is a non-partisan 17 role. It is a national security role, and we're 18 grateful that you've stepped into this, but it is 19 important that we actually get you on the task to 20 be able to make sure that it's out there. 21 You mentioned earlier in your testimony 22 that we do have a morale problem at DHS right 23 now, and I think a lot of that is because people 24 that signed up to be federal law enforcement to 25 be able to protect the United States of America</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 135</p>	<p>1 ability to be able to make those changes. But 2 I'm not going to ask you to make a commitment to 3 this, because this is just one of those detail 4 areas, but will you commit in the future to 5 working with us, that this committee and you can 6 work together to be able to figure out how the 7 folks that are on the field can actually make 8 decisions about the facilities they work in? 9 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yeah. Senator, I 10 commit to working with you on that issue. 11 SENATOR LANKFORD: Terrific. And then 12 I had a constituent in Oklahoma that is a hunter, 13 like you are, like I am. He had a bag that he 14 had some additional rounds that were in his bag 15 that were left over from a hunting trip months 16 before. He packed his bag, went on a vacation 17 trip overseas, went through security with his 18 bag. When he got overseas and then left and came 19 back, they scanned his bag and said, "You have 20 bullets, you have rounds in your bag," and he had 21 I think five that were in his bag, that he didn't 22 even remember were left over in an outside pocket 23 from a hunting trip before. 24 Well, they promptly put him in jail and 25 held him there and detained him there. Now, we</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 137</p>

<p>1 worked through all the process to be able to get 2 him back. My question is that same bag went 3 through TSA security in my state before it went 4 through security overseas. And so, one of the 5 questions that I've asked is why were those 6 rounds picked up there and not here? 7 Now, we don't have the full answer to 8 that yet, but that's just one of those TSA 9 questions that we need to have. Americans right 10 now are on planes all over the country, and they 11 count on a certain level of security when they go 12 through that process. So, in the days ahead, 13 will you work with me to be able to identify what 14 are the challenges that we still face with the 15 screening process and to be able to correct those 16 for the security of all Americans? 17 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yes, Senator, I will 18 work with you on that. 19 SENATOR LANKFORD: Thank you. 20 GOVERNOR NOEM: I was surprised TSA 21 didn't come up more today, but that is an area in 22 need of reform as well, and I look forward to 23 working with you there. 24 SENATOR LANKFORD: Look forward to 25 that. Thank you. I yield back.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 138</p>	<p>1 border security, generally. We know we need to 2 provide some kind of path to earn citizenship for 3 a lot of the undocumented people in this country, 4 and we know it's possible, because we did it in 5 2013. 6 The United States Senate, as you will 7 recall, passed a comprehensive immigration reform 8 measure. Overwhelmingly, it was bipartisan. I 9 was proud to be a part of it, going through the 10 Judiciary Committee, but obviously it will 11 involve Homeland Security, and I hope that we can 12 continue, as Senator Lankford was a part of the 13 effort in the last session to expand on those 14 efforts and move forward on a bipartisan basis 15 toward bipartisan comprehensive immigration 16 reform. 17 I want to talk to you a little bit 18 about domestic terrorism, which we discussed 19 during my previous round, and I know you've 20 discussed it afterward, including not just 21 migrant crime and radicalization by ISIS, which 22 are real and present problems, I also want to ask 23 you about domestic terrorism events unrelated to 24 groups outside our borders. We've seen a rise in 25 antisemitism in this country. It has spiked</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 140</p>
<p>1 SENATOR PAUL: Government needs a 2 healthy dose of common sense. Bullets in your 3 bag. I had a guy with bullets in the back of his 4 pickup truck coming back from Mexico. We 5 arrested him and took his truck, and only because 6 the Institute of Justice fought for him for three 7 years that he get his truck back. That's crazy, 8 the things we do. Let's have some common sense, 9 and hopefully, someone overseeing it will allow 10 that. Senator Blumenthal, you're going to finish 11 us up. 12 SENATOR BLUMENTHAL: Thank you, 13 Chairman Paul. I'm the last of your questioners, 14 so that means I get unlimited amounts of time. 15 GOVERNOR NOEM: Okay. 16 SENATOR BLUMENTHAL: Not really. Not 17 even close. I want to sort of continue the 18 emphasis on bipartisanship and most especially on 19 immigration reform. What this nation needs is 20 comprehensive immigration reform. We know about 21 the need for more H-1B visas and other kinds of 22 extensions of the visa program that enable the 23 United States to have more workers that are 24 desperately needed in certain areas of our 25 country. We know that there has to be better</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 139</p>	<p>1 beyond any prediction, and I want to know of your 2 concern with antisemitist, racist events, 3 Charlottesville, Buffalo, Pittsburgh, there's a 4 shorthand for these violent terrorist acts 5 against people in the United States. 6 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yes, Senator, I'm very 7 concerned about what we've seen in this country 8 as far as antisemitic violence that has happened. 9 In fact, last year during our legislative 10 session, I brought legislation to more clearly 11 define it so that we could fight it in our home 12 state. And I'm hopeful I can work with you to 13 continue to do what we can to make sure that we 14 are addressing this rising threat and not 15 facilitating it in this country. 16 SENATOR BLUMENTHAL: And I just want to 17 make sure that when you say we're protecting 18 Americans against terrorism, that we're 19 protecting all Americans, including people in 20 mosques, in churches, in synagogues, people 21 regardless of their worship, their race, their 22 background. We need to protect all Americans 23 from antisemitism, racism, Islamophobia. I hope 24 you'll commit to that effort. 25 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yes, correct. Thank</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 141</p>

<p>1 you, Senator, and I look forward to working with 2 you to do that.</p> <p>3 SENATOR BLUMENTHAL: In my closing 4 minute-and-a-half, I just want to call your 5 attention to an effort that I've led to help 6 reunite children with their parents, children who 7 were separated as a result of the so-called 8 family separation policy. In the last 9 administration, I have introduced a measure 10 called Keep Families Together, not only to limit 11 separation of families at or near ports of entry, 12 but also the Families Belong Together Act for 13 several Congresses to help bring the children, 14 the kids who were victims of this policy and who 15 still are not back with their parents. I hope 16 that you will support that kind of effort.</p> <p>17 GOVERNOR NOEM: Senator, the Trump 18 administration never had a family separation 19 policy. They had a zero-tolerance policy, which 20 said that our laws would be followed. What I'm 21 alarmed by is the over 300,000 children that went 22 missing during the Biden administration. And 23 when we talk about children and what they're 24 potentially facing as far as victimization in 25 this country and the trafficking that's going on,</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 142</p>	<p>1 to keep families together. We will uphold our 2 law, and we'll make sure that we're doing 3 everything we can to keep our children safe from 4 the trafficking and the drug epidemic that's hit 5 this country.</p> <p>6 SENATOR BLUMENTHAL: I'm going to end 7 on an optimistic note and say I take that as a 8 yes.</p> <p>9 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yeah.</p> <p>10 SENATOR BLUMENTHAL: Thank you, Mr. 11 Chairman.</p> <p>12 SENATOR PAUL: Thank you for your 13 testimony. The nominee has filed responses to 14 biographical and financial questionnaires, 15 answered prehearing questions submitted by the 16 committee, and had their financial statements 17 reviewed by the Office of Government Ethics. 18 Without objection, this information will be part 19 of the hearing record with the exception of the 20 financial data, which are on file and available 21 for public inspection in the committee offices. 22 The hearing will remain open until 5:00 p.m. 23 today, Friday, January 17th for the submission of 24 statements and questions.</p> <p>25 For the record, this hearing is</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 144</p>
<p>1 this administration's lack of desire to find out 2 where those children are or what they may be 3 going through is alarming to me. So, I want to 4 stop that.</p> <p>5 SENATOR BLUMENTHAL: Well, because my 6 time is expiring, I'm just going to interrupt 7 again with apologies to say let's put aside ...</p> <p>8 GOVERNOR NOEM: Well, I can't put aside 9 340,000 children.</p> <p>10 SENATOR BLUMENTHAL: Let's put aside 11 the labels, let's put aside what happened in the 12 past. There are still a thousand children who 13 are separated and waiting to be reunited. I'd 14 like your commitment that you're going to 15 continue the effort to reunite them with their 16 parents.</p> <p>17 GOVERNOR NOEM: Senator, keeping 18 families together is critically important to me 19 and to this country. I'm concerned about Laken 20 Riley's family, that they no longer have her. 21 I'm concerned about the fact that we have people 22 in this country that don't know where their 23 children are or people in other countries who 24 sent their children here and they've been lost by 25 this administration. So, yes, my focus will be</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 143</p>	<p>1 adjourned.</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p> <p>5</p> <p>6</p> <p>7</p> <p>8</p> <p>9</p> <p>10</p> <p>11</p> <p>12</p> <p>13</p> <p>14</p> <p>15</p> <p>16</p> <p>17</p> <p>18</p> <p>19</p> <p>20</p> <p>21</p> <p>22</p> <p>23</p> <p>24</p> <p>25</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 145</p>

1 CERTIFICATION
2 I, Sonya Ledanski Hyde, certify that the
3 foregoing transcript is a true and accurate
4 record of the proceedings.

5
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14
15 Date: February 17, 2025

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